Encounter

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edited by
Stephen Spender & Melvin J. Lasky

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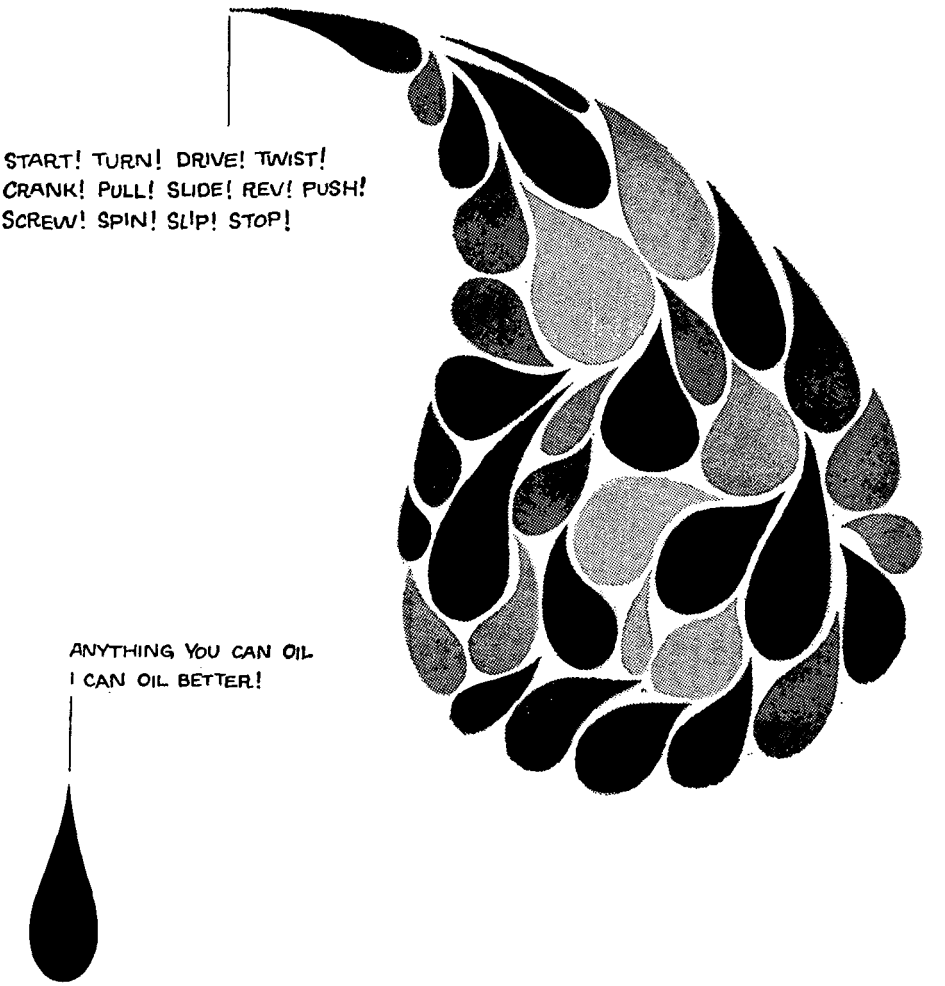

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Encounter

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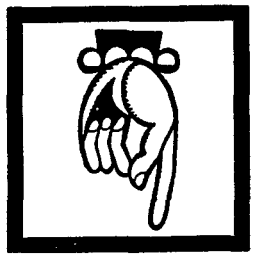

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Goronwy Rees

Have the Welsh a Future?

WALES IS A SMALL COUNTRY and the Welsh are a small people. One says a people and not a nation, because no one really knows whether the Welsh are a nation at all. Yet they appear to have everything which, elsewhere, is required to make a nation; a compact geographical area, race, history, language, literature. They even have a national flag and, rather absurdly, in Cardiff, a national capital. But they do not have a government; and it is one of the most remarkable facts about the Welsh that a people so sharply defined by race, culture, social structure and temperament should show no desire for a government of their own and would regard the prospect of having to establish one with the greatest possible dismay.

There is, of course, a Welsh Nationalist Party, *Plaid Cymru*, but it is small and ineffective and attracts only a fanatic fringe of the population. Its political prospects, indeed, are so bleak that to-day some of its younger members, despairing of the arts of persuasion, advocate a resort to violence and illegality as a method of calling attention to the wrongs and injustices of which they believe themselves to be the victims. Sometimes they pass from words to action and, on a minute scale, practise the politics of the deed by resistance to civil authority or attempts to sabotage a nuclear power station. Such examples may provoke sympathy, but do not inspire imitation. The Welsh are a peace-loving people with a profound respect for established authority. It is not likely that Welsh Gandhis or Welsh gunmen will ever set the hearts of their countrymen aflame.

Neither persuasion nor violence are likely to convince Welshmen that they suffer under evil for which the proper remedy would be a national government of their own. To a few Welshmen this is a bitter disappointment. To the majority it is simply proof that the Welsh are capable of a realism and commonsense which are not usually associated with their character.

THE ABSENCE IN Wales of any general demand for self-government is a remarkable phenomenon in an age when nationalism is bringing new nations into existence every day, very often at the expense, or to the benefit, of precisely the Parliament at Westminster which is to-day responsible for Welsh affairs. It is all the more remarkable because the Welsh are by no means lacking in the kind of racial self-consciousness, or the feelings of resentment, inferiority or persecution-mania which elsewhere have provided a foundation for flourishing and successful nationalist movements. The individual Welshman is, in most cases, highly conscious of his racial separateness in the amalgam of peoples which goes to make up the United Kingdom. He may have been incorporated into its political and social structure but he has never been entirely assimilated and, whatever reason may tell him, he retains a sense of emotional remoteness and alienation from its dominant culture.

He expresses this feeling by his devotion to institutions and ways of life which he feels he has created for himself. Sometimes this takes grotesque forms, as at the National Eisteddfod, an annual festival of literature and song, at which the Welsh, arrayed in druidic fancy dress invented by a fraudulent eighteenth-century archeologist called Iolo Morgannwg, like to feel that they are successfully preserving the bardic traditions of the Middle Ages. Or sometimes, as in their forms of religious worship, or, equally, in the way they play Rugby football, it expresses a genuine sense of style through which the Welsh can assert their sense of being specifically different from other peoples, and most of all, of course, from the English.

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THE WELSHMAN cannot cross the border into England, across the protective dyke built by the Saxon King Offa, without feeling himself a stranger and a foreigner, and without feeling also, very often, that the English regard him as such. Equally, few Englishmen cross the same border in the reverse direction, as they do in their thousands on their holidays to visit the Welsh coast, without feeling that they are entering foreign territory, with ways that are dark, mysterious and often very unsympathetic to them. The English are quick to recognise this alien element even in the physical appearance of the Welsh, who are mostly small, dark-haired, dark-eyed people, slightly built, as different from the English as their own small black, curly-polled Welsh cattle from a herd of dewy-eyed Jerseys or Guernseys.

The Welshman's sense of difference and separateness from his neighbours is, in part at least, a function of the geography and landscape of his country. Wales is, once again, because it cannot be repeated enough, a small country. It can easily be crossed by car in any direction in the course of a day. From North to South, between the Mersey estuary and the Bristol Channel, is no more than a hundred and thirty-six miles; East to West Wales is nearly a hundred miles at its widest and under forty at its narrowest, between Aberystwyth and the Shropshire border. But within these narrow boundaries it is a singularly beautiful country, of mountains and grasslands, of lakes and rivers which pour through steep valleys divided from each other, and from the world, by bare and barren uplands where only a few sheep graze; "these valleys," says a distinguished Welsh geographer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "are the special homes of the Welsh heritage." The coastline is long and rocky and deeply indented with bays and inlets and harbours fringed by strips of golden and sometimes silver sand. And for all its miniature quality, there are parts of the country which seem strangely remote from what we know to-day as civilisation, with a remoteness which belongs as much to time as to space, and the people who live there have a shy, secretive and elusive air, as if bound by mysterious ties to the mythical past of their own Welsh legends.

I HAVE DESCRIBED elsewhere a scene I once saw, on a cold, golden and sundrenched Christmas morning on an island of shells off the coast near Harlech in North Wales; I repeat it here because it still seems to me to express so much that is typical of one aspect of Wales. On the shore three children were gathering driftwood, which they piled into a little cart drawn by a small Welsh pony, while a young sheep dog, as pretty and neurotic as a girl, frisked and gambolled and barked at the edge of the waves. The scene was empty and bare as an abstract painting; nothing to catch the eye except the millions of tiny shells of which the island was formed, the blank and blazing blue of the sky, the pale golden torrent of sunshine which poured down to mingle with the steel grey of the sea, nothing to be heard but the waves breaking gently on the shore, the cries of the sea birds, the dog's excited barks, the Welsh voices of the children. I asked them if the dog was theirs and the little girl, dressed in rags like a gipsy's, answered shyly in Welsh: "Yes. And once we had a cat too, but she has gone to Jesus."

There can be few Welshmen who do not carry within them, preserved perhaps since childhood, memories of some such scenes as these, of something as naïve and primitive as one of those tiny azure-and-gold enamelled landscapes which we see sometimes in early Italian paintings, forming a background to some stiff medieval legend in which everything has the clarity and detail of a dream. Such memories, which help to form the imagination of a race, always have in them a certain childish quality, as if it was indeed the childhood of a race that was being recollected. There is something of this feeling in Dylan Thomas' beautiful poem, *Fern Hill*. In *Under Milk Wood* it is turned into a kind of compassionate mockery. And it is significant that when one of the best of living Welsh writers, Emyr Humphreys, wrote a novel about childhood and youth, he should have given it the title of *A Toy Epic*, which precisely expresses a Welshman's sense that somewhere in the past, either his own or his people's, he had heard a golden and magical legend in which, because it was also a nursery rhyme, everything was safe, diminutive and protected, and yet had all the freshness and unexpectedness of a children's adventure story.

THE WELSH HAVE a word, *hiraeth*, which means both nostalgia and homesickness, a longing for what has been lost both in time and in place. Like all words which mean much to a people, it has been tarnished by use in a thousand mediocre poems, and cheapened and coarsened by many an after-dinner speech to societies of

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Welsh exiles; yet it still succeeds in saying something which is profoundly important to a Welshman. It expresses the longing for a world of vanished simplicities, a fairyland of lost content where, as in the opening tale of the great Welsh collection of folk legends, *Y Mabinogi*, a prince forever pursues a lady on a pale white horse, and though his has the speed of a greyhound and hers never breaks out of a trot, he can never come any closer to her. After many strange adventures and trafficking with the powers of darkness, the prince wins his lady; but *Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed*, is after all only a legend, though it still has the power to arouse the sense of something inexpressibly ancient and mysterious, ever fresh, ever young, as if it brought us closer to the childhood of the world.

WHEN THE WELSH INTELLIGENTSIA, that is to say, their teachers, administrators, professors, Methodist ministers, inspectors of schools, crowned bards, and officials of the British Broadcasting Corporation, talk of "the Welsh way of life," as they do interminably, they often speak as if the world of *Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed*, were the actual world in which Welsh men and women lived, worked and had their being. And indeed even David Jones (perhaps the most distinguished of living Welshmen, both as a writer and as a painter) in his two books, *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*, has tried to convince us that the real world we inhabit is in fact the ancient world of Welsh myth and legend, so that when, for instance, the Welch Fusiliers thought they were fighting the Germans on the Western Front in the first world war, they were really fighting the bloody battle described in the heroic poem, *Y Gododdin*, which the Welsh poet Aneurin is supposed to have composed in the eighth century. But perhaps one might add without malice that perhaps David Jones is only able to sustain his illusion because he himself lives near London and takes care not to confront himself too sharply with the realities of life as it is lived in Wales.

But of course most Welshmen are not capable of, and do not try to imitate, quite so daring a leap of the imagination as David Jones. Perhaps the only other one who does so is his almost equally talented countryman, Saunders Lewis, who is, significantly enough, also a Catholic like David Jones, but unlike him writes in Welsh and not in English. The world to which the minds, or at least the tongues, of the official panegyrists of the Welsh way of life are turned is not the mythical and legendary world of *Y Mabinogi*, though to this of course they also pay their formal respects; it is rather to the slightly less remote world, though equally belonging to the past, which the Welsh people created for themselves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is the desiccated ghost of this world, and of its culture, which to-day chiefly continues to haunt the minds of the Welsh people.

That world and that culture were the creation of peasants; primarily for the reason that the immense service rendered by Wales to England in providing her with the Tudor monarchy also stripped Wales of her own aristocracy, and of the whole of her educated, professional and administrative class, who followed the Tudors to London, if possible, like them, to make their fortunes there. Wales was left leaderless, the country of a decaying squirearchy and an impoverished peasantry, in which even its language threatened to degenerate into a collection of mutually unintelligible dialects. It was indeed through a rebirth of their language, as a result of the magnificent translation of the Bible into Welsh in the sixteenth century, that the Welsh found the means to their survival, if not as a nation, as a people.

THE WELSH, LIKE the Jews, are "the people of the Book"; it is a fact which creates a close affinity between the two races, though the Welsh, unlike the Jews, have never found a Weizmann to teach them that a people cannot live by a book alone. Even now that they are ceasing to believe in it, the Bible still remains the greatest single influence on their language and, through their language, on their modes and habits of thought.

Linguistically, the influence of the Welsh translation of the Bible can be compared with that of Luther's translation on the formation of modern High German; and as Brecht said that the Bible was the best German book, so a Welshman could say that it is the best Welsh one. But historically the influence of the Welsh translation of the Bible was far deeper, because it gave a common language, and a new world of literary culture, to an entire people which, because of the Anglicisation of its ruling class, had achieved a remarkable homogeneity and uniformity of social structure; that is to say, a people in which differences of class, wealth, education or culture had been reduced to the narrowest limits. Wales was a ploughed land ready

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for the seed. This fundamentally democratic organisation of Welsh society has persisted until to-day and still remains one of the factors which most sharply differentiates it from the rest of the British Isles. It is also one of the factors which are apt to make a Welshman most ill at ease in the class-infested society of the English.

The influence of the Welsh Bible both contributed to, and was reinforced by, the revival of religion which, through the mediation of John Wesley and of his followers in Wales, in the eighteenth century resurrected in the Welsh people talents, ambitions and aspirations which had been dormant for centuries. It gave the Welsh, for a long period which has lasted almost until to-day, a form of religion which was as idiosyncratic as that of a tribe. Like English forms of Dissent, it was directed against the Church of England as by law established, but to the acrimonies of religion and the strife of classes it also added the passions of racial feeling. Like Wesley's, it was a religion of the poor and outcast, but in Wales it became the religion of an entire people which felt itself to be poor and outcast. Yet it was also a deeply personal and introspective faith, much concerned, as is right in a democracy, with the salvation of the individual sinner and also with the intellectual perplexities of "fixed faith, free will, foreknowledge absolute"; profoundly puritanical, anti-rationalist, anti-sensual, because puritanism, abstinence, the denial of the pleasures of the senses, were seen by the Welsh as levers by which they might raise themselves out of the slough of poverty and ignorance which encompassed them. It would have been a dark religion, and indeed in many of its manifestations of exaltation and hysteria was more akin to tribal superstition than religious faith, if it were not that the drama of the chapel, played out to the music of Welsh hymns and Welsh voices, had not brought to the Welsh the sweet assurances of spiritual comfort and personal salvation.

In a sense at least the promise was fulfilled. The religious revival of the eighteenth century released energies and aspirations in the Welsh which, in the course of the following century, enabled them to transform themselves into an astonishingly literate people, literate perhaps even to the point of oversophistication, so that nowhere in the world is the word more easily taken for the deed. They endowed themselves with an admirable system of primary and secondary education, strengthened by the additional forms of scriptural and theological instruction provided by the chapels and the Sunday Schools, and by the end of the century had crowned the edifice by the foundation of three university colleges, later united in a federal University of Wales.

The foundation of the Welsh university system again reflected the democratic structure of Welsh society. In its beginnings it was paid for, as the Welsh like to say, "out of the pennies of the poor," the direct contributions of the Welsh people. Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of the educational system established in the nineteenth century was that it was, to a degree which made Wales a striking contrast to England, the possession of the people as a whole and was open and accessible to even the poorest. Its most glaring defect was that it made no provision for the instruction of the Welsh people in and through their own language. This was largely the result of Education Acts which originated in the Parliament at Westminster. But it is also true that the educational reformers of the nineteenth century were deeply aware of the need to give the Welsh access to a wider culture and to wider economic and social opportunities than existed within the limits of their own society; and the key to this wider world was a command and mastery of the alien English tongue.

Yet the combined effects of religion and education also produced a remarkable literary renaissance of the Welsh language; and at the same time it created a specifically Welsh political movement which, as a radical wing of the Liberal Party, was the most significant Welsh contribution to British politics since Henry Tudor ascended the throne of England. Welsh Radicalism defended and advanced the interests of the small Welsh tenant farmer and farm labourer; it was against the deracinated landlords of Wales, against the Anglican Church, against "the classes," all of which were forces alien and oppressive to the small democratic classless rural community out of which it sprang. Some of its representatives even nourished vague hopes of achieving for Wales a kind of Dominion status within the British Commonwealth.

In David Lloyd George, Welsh Radicalism produced a politician of genius and a statesman of world stature, though of dubious morality and unstable temperament, who first delivered

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the most serious assault on the English established order which it had suffered since Cromwell and then became the architect of British victory in the first world war. In doing so he became the prisoner of the social forces which he had first attacked, and thereby lost the basis of his support in Wales, and in the Liberal Party. He found himself a leader without a party, a commander without an army; as Lord Beaverbrook has said, he was like the driver of a motor car who did not care in which direction the car travelled, so long as he was at the wheel.

Both in his early triumphs as a radical leader and in his later decline, Lloyd George was the true representative of the Welsh rural culture which produced him. In his early assault on English society, he was sustained by the energies and passions which the Welsh had developed in the course of the nineteenth century, by the forces of a kind of rural populism which was much akin to the populism of the Middle West of the United States. But by the time he became a war leader and a British Prime Minister, that movement had already begun to disintegrate, with the decay of the rural community which had created it.

When to-day Welshmen praise "the Welsh way of life," which was the way of life which their fathers and grandfathers knew, they are praising a society and a culture which belong essentially to the past, and this accounts for much of the inanition, the falsehood, the sheer tedium of the intellectual life of Wales to-day, in which the deadest of dead horses are continually and mercilessly thrashed in an effort to provoke them into life. For a people cannot live upon its past, and that past itself, however well-loved, ceases to have any meaning unless it is continuously transformed and transmuted in the light of the present. This is a task which modern Wales has conspicuously failed to discharge, and the responsibility for this failure falls pre-eminently upon those who would claim to be its spiritual and intellectual leaders, who, having little virtue in themselves, continue to live on the little that is left of the faith and energy of their fathers.

For myself, when on St. David's Day, the national saint's day of Wales, I hear Welshmen at innumerable assemblies sing their stereotyped praises of a way of life that has gone, I remember a visit I once paid not long ago to a small hill farm on a large estate in mid-Wales. The tenants were two brothers, both over seventy, and the elder of them was permanently bedridden and lay under a few threadbare blankets on an ancient iron bedstead in a room that was otherwise empty of furniture. The younger brother, as well as he could, farmed the land, which at that height was overgrown by bracken, and together the two of them lived a life of abject poverty, in a hovel that gave no more than the barest protection from the elements, on the produce of the few poor sheep and cattle which the land could sustain.

Those two brothers had all the virtue of the Welsh way of life. They spoke only Welsh; they had never been corrupted by contact with the English; they lived in almost primitive simplicity; on Sundays the able-bodied brother still walked across the hills to the little chapel a few miles away, to sing the magnificent hymns of William Williams, Pantycelyn, and listen to sermons that preached all the miseries of the damned and the ecstasies of salvation. And in their pale cheeks and hollow eyes one could read what little nourishment all these things had to give when the life had drained out of them, as it had, in every real sense, out of those two brothers.

James Joyce once wrote: "Ireland is an old sow that eats her farrow," and there are moments in Wales when one feels that she also is a Celtic mother who would perform the same service for her children.

But of course it would be absurd to suppose that rural Wales is the whole of Wales; it is simply that many Welshmen speak as if this were the only part of the country that has a true title to be Welsh. I once heard one Welshman, from North Wales, say scornfully of another, from South Wales, who, slightly intoxicated, was displaying all the brashness, *panache* and self-assertiveness of his kind: "That's what South Walians are like. All they can do is shout, drink, and play Rugby," and in his voice there was all the contempt of an older for a newer culture, of a peasant for a proletarian.

By population, Wales is an industrialised country and its people an industrialised people. Of its total population of about two million five hundred thousand, nearly two-thirds are concentrated in the two highly industrialised counties of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire. South Wales is built upon a vast bed of coal; the Industrial Revolution made it profitable to

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exploit the coal; coal brought iron and steel and they in turn brought railways, roads, docks and harbours, shipping; South Wales traded with the whole world and its heavy industry was a vital part of the world economy.

The rapid industrialisation of South Wales in the nineteenth century created a culture which is in some ways the antithesis of the older, native culture of the rural areas; a coal miner in South Wales is more akin to a coal miner elsewhere, in the Ruhr, in Pennsylvania (where immigrant Welshmen in the nineteenth century christened the mining villages with names taken from the Welsh valleys of their youth) than he is to his rural countrymen across the mountains. The typical Welshman is not in fact a dweller among mountains and rivers and pastures; he is a man who has come up out of the black coal pits of the Rhondda, an underground kingdom like that kingdom of Annwn, the Welsh Hades, where Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed, dwelt for a year when he exchanged shapes with the Prince of Darkness.

Heavy industry in South Wales also made the Welshman a victim of the cyclical economic proceses, the succession of boom and slump, which characterised the industrial system of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Welshman of South Wales is the child of *Konjunktur* economics, with memories of savage exploitation, of bitter industrial conflict, and of heroic efforts to create his own working-class organisations. In his mythology, the highest place is given to the South Wales Miners' Federation. But though he is a Trade Unionist of the most passionately loyal kind, he is also, like an Asturian miner, half an anarchist; there is something violent in him, a kind of ruffianism like that of an Italian bravo, swaggering, mercurial and bombastic, tinged with a cynicism which can make him sceptical and recalcitrant even towards his own chosen leaders, particularly when they are at their most eloquent.

As A BOY I was brought up in a little seaside town in mid-Wales, in the warm security, the domesticity, the puritan simplicity of a Welsh manse; I was too young as yet to realise that these things could go together with an intolerable narrowness of intellectual and spiritual life.

The town was surrounded by a bare wild beautiful hinterland of mountains and moors, of torrents and waterfalls that seemed to pour into the streets of the town, a world of birds and animals, and sometimes if I walked on the beach at night after a storm I would find it covered by millions of small silvery fishes, a more miraculous shoal to me in the moonlight than any we were told of in the Bible which was our daily reading.

I knew very little of the world outside the tiny frontiers of my birthplace until, at the age of thirteen, one summer holiday I attended a camp organised for Welsh secondary schoolboys, and there made the acquaintance for the first time of my contemporaries, and their seniors, from the mining valleys in South Wales. To me they seemed like creatures of another race, bigger, rougher, tougher, uncouth and barbarian, jeering and foul-mouthed; I might have been an ancient Roman confronted for the first time by the Goths. But they also seemed freer and more adult and less inhibited than the boys I had known, scornful of authority, untouched by the miasma of bigotry and hypocrisy which emanated from the twenty-four chapels of our little town. Later, when my father had moved to South Wales, I came to know them better, played football against them, and in the years of mass unemployment saw these same boys, and their fathers, lounging in their hundreds in the streets of some mining town, leaning against the lampposts smoking stubs of cigarettes, or racing their greyhounds against each other on the hill-tops above the valley; and even in the intolerable boredom and waste of unemployment they retained a kind of *farouche* independence which preserved their human dignity.

The contrast between my childhood world in which fishes, animals, birds were as familiar as human beings, and the tumultuous, dramatic, sometimes tragic life of the South Wales valleys was for me a kind of traumatic shock from which I did not easily or quickly recover. And the impotence of Welshmen to ameliorate or avert conditions which in the worst years became the living death of an entire community destroyed for ever the illusion that the culture of a primitive pastoral society could ever be adequate to the needs of a people which, in their overwhelming majority, were the children of an industrial age. It seemed to me then that all the virtues, if such indeed they were, of "the Welsh way of life," were worth nothing as compared with the efforts and struggles of the South Wales Miners' Federation.

TO-DAY SUCH FEELINGS are in a sense hopelessly outdated. For by yet another

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reversal of the economic wheel of fortune, South Wales is now once again a boom industrial area, as it was in the days of Crawshay Bailey and his engine, no longer dependent, as it once was, on coal mining, which now employs only a ninth instead of a quarter of the insured population of Wales; it is the home of huge new modern steel plants and entirely new industries based on the most modern techniques, such as nylon, aluminium, chemicals, electrical engineering, precision instruments and oil refining. Such an amazing change in the fortunes of South Wales has made of her, if not some mythical land of milk and honey, yet one which enjoys just as much as anywhere else all the pleasures and luxuries of the affluent society, and, just as much as anywhere else, a product of the scientific and technological revolution of our time. And with this change has come a change in the psychology of the individual Welshman; he is now even further removed from his compatriots in the rural areas, and, with his motor car, his home on a new housing estate, his job in an automated steel works or oil refinery he is equally far removed from his cloth-capped mufflered father in the coal pit.

Yet it is significant that this transformation has not been in any creative sense the work of Welshmen, nor has Welsh culture or the Welsh way of life contributed in any way to the scientific and intellectual advances which have made the transformation possible. Like the industrial revolution itself, it has been the work of impersonal and alien forces to which the values proclaimed by the official propagandists of Welsh culture are increasingly irrelevant.

Thus it is still possible for a Welshman to see himself or to feel himself once again as a victim, or perhaps even a beneficiary, of forces over which he has no control. This reinforces both the sense of uneasiness which is based on the growing contrast between his present environment and what he likes to think of as his heritage from the past, and a sense of inferiority which he tends to camouflage, by overcompensation, with the pæans of self-praise and self-applause by which he tries to erect a curtain between himself and reality. The Welsh to-day tend to show all the characteristic vices of a minority race; over-aggressiveness towards those, especially the English, who, they vaguely feel, have stolen their birthright, resentment at being rewarded with what is to-day a very satisfying mess of pottage, fears that, because of their minority position, they may still lose even that which remains to them, incapacity for self-criticism, because they shrink from the reality it would reveal.

YET FOR SUCH FEELINGS there is in fact very little justification to-day. They are an historical hangover from past experiences to which the self-conscious and patriotic Welshman clings like a drunkard to his bottle, so that very often he rejects precisely what is most valuable, original, and creative in his own society. For if the industrialisation of South Wales can be regarded as an invasion of a still predominantly rural economy by new, alien, and revolutionary forces, the Welshman's response to it was to create a form of society which was in many ways unique. The characteristic landscape of South Wales is one of long coal-begrimed terraces of miners' cottages clinging to the steep slopes of a narrow valley in which an inky stream polluted by industrial waste flows past the gaunt machinery and slag heaps of the pit-head. This landscape has its own strange beauty; and in these valleys the Welsh miners created a society which had immense richness and depth, closely-knit, intimate, homogeneous, turbulent and violent, much addicted to liquor and to fights, given the force of idealism by religion, resonant with music and song, as devoted to Rugby football as Spain to the bull fight, and with its own characteristic institutions of the miners' lodges and the Labour Party. It achieved at times a kind of tragic grandeur because of the miner's long and bitter struggle to defend his human dignity against exploitation, poverty and wage slavery. In this struggle, traditional Welsh culture helped him not at all; it was his own culture, which he had created for himself in the darkness of the valleys, which provided the spiritual energies on which he had to draw.

It was, overwhelmingly, a proletarian culture; it was the product of a people's reaction to alien ways, and to a remarkable degree it succeeded in imposing their own character and temperament upon them. It is a mark of the sterility of the official version of Welsh culture that it has never succeeded in giving any adequate expression to the kind of society which flourished in the South Wales valleys. In a writer, for example, like Gwyn Thomas, richly endowed with original talent, we can see all the evasions and falsifications which have turned him, for lack of self-criticism and self-discipline, into a literary *farceur*, a kind of licensed clown, and made him into a victim of the fatal Welsh instinct for

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sentimentalising, sweetening, and vulgarising whatever is best in their own people. And in this process one can perhaps detect, once again, an effect of that deep-seated Welsh nostalgia, that *hiraeth*, which cannot find satisfaction in anything until it has been disinfected of the taint of things as they really are, either by endowing them with the respectability of the past, or by giving them a form which conceals the harshness of the present. The Welsh love fairy tales; what they cannot face is the reality out of which fairy tales are produced, and for that reason they cannot create genuine fairy tales any longer.

THE CONTRAST between the rural society of North and Mid-Wales, and the industrial society of South Wales, with all the differences of attitude and outlook that this implies, creates in a Welshman a kind of tension which accounts for much that is confused, ambivalent, Janus-headed in his character and temperament. The contrast is all the sharper because presented on so narrow a stage; one can walk from one society into the other in the course of a day's march. It is as if the Welshman were being continually asked to look upon this picture and on that, and any choice is all the more difficult because both pictures appear to be so characteristically Welsh.

One is tempted to believe that this tension may be all the deeper and more significant because it reflects, or repeats under another form, a far more ancient division between North and South Wales, which existed long before pastoralism ever decayed or industrialism was ever born. The division was so strong that perhaps only twice in their history have the Welsh ever achieved any kind of unity against the forces encroaching on them from across Offa's Dyke; once under Llewelyn the Great in the 13th century, and once in Owain Glyndwr's savage revolt in the fifteenth.

One might also be tempted to think that this kind of tension within a society might be one of those fertilising elements which give it variety and depth; as, precisely, the kind of tension that exists between Wales and her great neighbour has made their union fruitful for both of them. But such a tension is only fruitful and fertile when both elements in it are held in balance, when it is not a question of a brutal "either/or" but of a choice rather to accept both. Whereas the kind of tension which exists in Wales appears too often as a conflict between mutually incompatible cultures, in which each nullifies and sterilises the other.

THIS CONFLICT IS most sharply and dramatically displayed in the condition of the Welsh language to-day. For some Welshmen, their language is the living embodiment of everything which is fundamental to their existence as Welshmen, and they could not really conceive of themselves existing as anything else. It is the medium through which they express their consciousness of their race and their culture, so much so indeed that they are very often ready to deny that anyone who does not speak the language has any right to call himself Welsh, or to call himself a Welsh writer if, like myself, he writes in English.

In doing so, of course, they relegate the great majority of their fellow-countrymen to the status of a kind of second-class citizen, almost like a Jew in an anti-Semitic Germany. At the beginning of this century nearly half the population of Wales could speak Welsh. By 1951 nearly 30 per cent spoke Welsh. By 1961, there were 656,000 Welsh-speaking Welshmen, or slightly over a quarter of the population. Those who are interested in the preservation of the living language look forward with some apprehension to what the next census figures will reveal, though there are also some who hope that the rapid decline of the language in the last forty years may have been arrested. If it has not, it seems likely that by the end of the century Welsh may have ceased to exist as a living language.

There is little doubt about the causes of its decline. They are many and various, but perhaps they could all be summarised by saying that Welsh is a language of a dying culture, that the rural areas in which that culture flourished and in which there was the highest proportion of Welsh speakers have become areas of depopulation, and that Welsh, either as a spoken or a written language has become increasingly incapable of serving the needs of a scientific and technological age.

THERE HAS RECENTLY been published a report on *The Welsh Language To-day* by *Y Cyngor Cymru a Mynwy* (The Council for Wales and Monmouthshire), an official body which has the task of advising the British Government on the effects of its activities on the general life of the people of Wales and Monmouthshire. The Council is composed of persons distinguished in various spheres of Welsh life; so far as Wales has a ruling class, these are the kind of people who compose it.

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The Report begins by declaring the Council's "fundamental standpoint," which is that "we wish to see the Welsh language preserved." It proceeds to survey the use of Welsh as a medium of communication in government and administration; in industry and working life; in the arts and entertainments; in religious worship; and the measures which have been taken to make it a subject of instruction and study in the schools and universities. It enumerates over fifty periodicals and fourteen weekly newspapers published in the Welsh language, and examines the effects of the Government subsidy to the publication of Welsh books, of which nearly a quarter of a million copies appeared in 1960; of these, significantly enough, 150,000 were children's books What the Report does not do is to say how many people actually read these books, journals, and periodicals, whose circulation is often minute; even more, it makes no attempt at any critical assessment of their literary and intellectual standards, which are often deplorable.

The Report ventures the perhaps pious hope that the efforts already made to preserve the Welsh language, particularly in the field of education, may have arrested its decline, but it also concludes that even further measures are required if its future is to be assured. Characteristically, because the Welsh have a passion for government by committee, it recommends the establishment of yet another official body (whose members are to be elected by the Council, though not necessarily, they say generously, from among its own members) which shall be made formally responsible for caring for the interests of the Welsh language. The Welsh answer to a problem is nearly always to appoint a Committee.

The Report is a curious, and in some ways characteristically Welsh document. It is written by worthy and no doubt well-meaning people, and yet it is full of the illusions and evasions which make any serious discussion of the future of the Welsh language almost impossible in Wales. Having expressed their own wish that the language shall survive, the Council makes no attempt to examine whether this is the wish of the Welsh people themselves, or whether its realisation, and the cost it would entail, would really conduce to their benefit. They say indeed that "all Welshmen... for the most part, are proud of the language and desire to see it survive," but this is patently untrue, for how can a man be genuinely proud of what means nothing to him?

Yet a slight note of uneasiness seems at moments to have marred the Council's deliberations. "They (the Council) are anxious," the Report says, "lest linguistic differences should disrupt the national unity. They do not believe that this disruption is inevitable." This is, on the surface, a hard and dark saying, obscure by any standards, and one cannot help thinking that the Council intended it to be obscure; yet it should not present any difficulties to anyone who has had any practice in interpreting nationalist propaganda, whatever language it is written in. It simply means that the Council is fully aware that many Welshmen are wholly indifferent whether the Welsh language lives or dies, have no use for it in their lives, and resent, sometimes violently, that their children should be subjected to compulsory instruction in it in the schools; but the Council would prefer that such things should not be mentioned.

As FOR the "national unity" which the Council is anxious to protect against "disruption," there is no real evidence that such an entity exists; it might indeed be true to say that it does not exist simply because the two languages, and the two entirely different cultures and societies of which they are the medium of expression, which co-exist uneasily together in Wales, make it impossible that it should exist. But to accept this, or even the possibility of it, would be to destroy at one blow several of the sacred cows which command the Council's devotion.

Again, the Council's belief that the "disruption" of a non-existent national unity "is not inevitable," simply means that they hope that no one will be rash enough to offer any serious criticism of the policies they advocate. For such a hope there is some justification and potential critics would be well advised to keep silent. When a few years ago Lord Raglan (a Monmouthshire peer who for many years has served Wales with great distinction in many high offices) expressed his opposition to the policy of inflicting the compulsory teaching of Welsh on the children of his own English-speaking county, he was subjected to such a barrage of Druidic curses and bardic imprecations that one might well have believed that he was about to be offered up as a human sacrifice to the Welsh tribal gods.

But Lord Raglan, of course, had many qualifications for the part of a sacrificial victim. He is a landowner, and the Welsh do not like landowners; he is a rationalist, and the Welsh like

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that even less; he does not speak Welsh, and he does not even pretend to a high regard for the Welsh language as a medium of expression and a key to understanding in a scientific and rationalist age; worst of all, perhaps, he is an anthropologist and regards tribal superstitions as a matter for objective and scientific enquiry. He was lucky to get away alive.

YET IN DISCUSSING the question of the future of the Welsh language, a Welshman like myself must beware of falling into precisely that error which is the besetting vice of his race; that is, the error of mistaking the past for the present, the myth for the reality, the word for the thing. For Wales to-day is changing so fast that the passions and controversies inspired by the question of the language are perhaps already things of the past, and a new generation of Welshman is arising for whom they are a matter of utter indifference. From this point of view indeed, Wales is apt to look like some tiny mausoleum of lost or dying causes. The Nonconformist chapels which once exerted so decisive an influence on every aspect of Welsh life are to-day empty or emptying; faith has ebbed away from them, and in Wales as elsewhere television now has more influence than religion. It is true that Wales still returns one of the seven Liberal members of Parliament, but the form of radicalism which was Wales' distinctive contribution to British politics now has no more influence in Wales than it has anywhere else. And even if South Wales still votes Labour, its socialism is no longer the socialism of the poor and oppressed, it is the socialism of those who demand a larger share in affluence, a bigger slice of cake. Aneurin Bevan, the last and greatest representative of the socialism of the miners' lodges, was already a figure of the past when he died, and if he had lived it is doubtful if he would have had any significant part to play in the new socialism of the managers and the technocrats. The strike which recently shut down the great Margam plant of the Steel Company of Wales was in no way a strike against harsh or oppressive conditions; it was a strike of craftsmen earning £25 a week who demand improved wage-differentials because, as they claim, in an automated steel plant their work has become of greater relative importance than that of a steel worker.

Yet the ghosts of the past still linger on in the minds of the old and middle-aged, and this accounts for much of that air of aridity and unreality which surrounds many of the controversies which continue to obsess the minds of Welsh intellectuals. At the same time, a new world and a new society are coming into being as a result of the industrial renaissance in South Wales. Even the democratic class structure of Wales is changing. It is losing its homogeneity and uniformity, based on the preponderance of a single class, whether of the peasant or the proletarian, and tends increasingly to adapt itself to that subtly graded social hierarchy which provides the anatomy of modern industrial society.

THE YOUNG WELSHMAN who is growing up in this society resembles the young Englishman across the border more than he does his own father. He is uninterested in the stale controversies, over religion, race, morals, total abstinence, which preoccupied an older generation. He takes his culture, not from the heritage of his past, but, as they do elsewhere, from the popular press, the television, the jazz session, the record player. Since this is in no way a specifically Welsh culture, he is less self-conscious and easier in his relations with the world outside Wales than his father was. He looks outward and not inward; if he aspires to higher education, he will prefer to go to an English university rather than a Welsh one because he will have more opportunities for self-development there than amid the intimate and insistent pressures of a closed community. He looks at life with a more direct and less prejudiced gaze, which is not distorted by reflections of the past. If he chooses to live and make his life in Wales, it is not because of idealism or because he is rooted in its tradition or its heritage, but quite simply because, as a young Welsh writer has recently said, he likes it there, now that time and change have destroyed many of the totems and taboos of the past and the revival of industry has created new opportunities for him. And if he does not like it, he votes with his feet against it and emigrates to England. He is a freer person than his father was. It is also possible that he is a less interesting because a less complicated one.

He is separated from his father also because he takes it for granted that he should enjoy the pleasures of life, and particularly the pleasures of the affluent society, however modest his share in it may be, just as others do elsewhere. And if he were told, as he often is, that this kind of a society and these kind of pleasures are not compatible with the life which has been lived in Wales for so long, he will not feel this as a

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deprivation but rather as a promise that for him life will be easier, pleasanter, and fuller of opportunity than it was in the past.

It is not surprising that, to many Welshmen, the social changes which are taking place so rapidly in Wales to-day should provoke the fear that they will mean the death of everything which Wales has been until to-day, that in the spick-and-span, up-to-date amenities of his bungalow on a new housing estate the Welshman may become just another inhabitant of the vast suburbia of the Western world, that with television and the motor car, the white collar and the super-market, life in Wales will lose all its original taste and savour.

Such fears are not exaggerated. But they are not fears which are in any way particular to Wales; they exist wherever a native tradition is threatened by the vast and anonymous forces which science and technology have released. And even if they were realised, all would not be lost, because Wales until to-day has lived so long upon its past that it has offered very little to the young imagination, handcuffed and fettered in the narrow world of the chapel and the Eisteddfod. But to-day there is reason to hope and believe that, for the young at least, the chains have now been struck off, and that with the renewal of their energies the Welsh may again repeat the kind of miracle which they performed in the 18th and 19th centuries. For they then stamped with their own unmistakable image the form which the industrial revolution took in the valleys of South Wales. It may well be that by accepting and assimilating, instead of rejecting, the revolutionary changes of the present age the Welsh can again succeed in creating a new and living culture in their own form and image. Those who fear for the future of the Welsh should learn to say with Hölderlin:

Wo aber Gefahr ist
Wächst das Rettende auch.

(Where there is danger,
There is also salvation . . .)

After Mount Athos

Eight hours of ceremony:
The Virgin's thousand years
Promise my flesh the bare
Pleasure of the sun, wind for the Hunter's ear.

I see an archimandrite's bones
Dance in a private ring,
Banging the world like a great tin can
While ghosts in the graveyard sing.

A fit upon his beard
Sets all the hairs awry,
But he doesn't cry like a girl I heard
Or jingle like money.

The clerk's sandwich is filled with compassion,
His lunch hour stretches across white sea shells.
An old rage tidies his addition.
And incense lights the urinals.

David Posner

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Nigel Dennis

On Swift & Satire

WHAT LESSONS did Swift learn from his reading of "history," and how did these lessons affect the course of his life?

There are two principal ones, and these dovetail exactly with his own principles and with the history of his own family. The first is that "particular men," those who carve for themselves, are innately vicious men, because though they may claim that "truth" is their ideal and "liberty" their aim, they are ruled in fact by pride, ambition and greed, and their intention, finally, is to undermine truth and destroy liberty. When Milton demands greater freedom of divorce, he does so with a show of honesty; but the hard fact behind the apparent honesty is that Milton himself has married a "shrew" and is pressing upon others a reform for which he pines himself. He could as well, Swift suggests cruelly, once blind, have pressed upon mankind the necessity for a general blindness and put up some fine arguments to prove that a total lack of vision would be of the highest benefit to the commonwealth. So, the wise man must always look for the selfish motive behind the projected reform and judge of the proposed "liberty" by an examination of the man that proposes it. Thus, one might say, if Pope and Defoe were to propose the same reform, it would be good when it came from Pope, because Pope is a virtuous man, but bad when it came from Defoe, because a Dissenter cannot but have a vicious aim in view. It is this peculiar line of argument which proves, in effect, that Defoe is bound to be more malicious than Pope, and it is why the former is dismissed as "the fellow that was pilloried, I have forgot his name" while the latter is assured of a good entry into Heaven. Pope, it should be noted, must also be regarded as the more trustworthy *because* he is a Roman Catholic: his may not be the perfect religious state, but it is one which rates a real stability far above a vicious individualism and exemplifies the truth that "all wise Christian governments . . . always had some established religion, leaving at best a toleration to others." Swift believed this so ardently that it obliged him even to tip his hat, though only briefly, to that monster-wrecker, Oliver Cromwell. For when the Irish Papists begged Cromwell to concede them their religious liberty, the despot was shrewd enough to answer that they might be as free as they pleased—provided they refrained from preaching, held no masses, and burnt no candles.

Thus, the second major lesson of history is the necessity for a single joint authority, ecclesiastical and political. And since Swift urges us to look closely at the motives of a man who has something to propose, let us take his advice and ask what were *his* motives in disliking tolerance and making authority the absolute backbone of his morality?

THE BLUNT ANSWER is that he loved authority more dearly than anything else. How far this was due to the lowered status which the collapse of authority had brought upon him and his family, we cannot say; but we can say surely that he desired dignity inordinately and regarded dignity and authority as two elements that stood or fell together. Authority stood so high in his regard that he had small respect

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for kings: this is not a paradox; it means simply that he despised kings because they took so frivolous or brutish a view of the nature of authority: they betrayed the dignity of great office. Swift expected them to do so: he liked to point out that the education of a young king consisted largely of lies, flattery, and chicanery and that only the rare monarch could be expected to overcome his disgusting childhood. But the lesson he drew from this was that a people should rally to their king like social workers rallying to a delinquent. For authority lay in this poor creature and he should be disclaimed or attacked only if his natural abominableness became intolerable. Swift's view of kings is no better than Shelley's and Byron's; but Swift, unlike these later poets, was tolerant of kings because he cherished, rather than detested, authority.

What he cherished in kings he cherished equally in himself. To be "used like a Lord" was no figure of speech: it was an absolute imperative. Those who used him otherwise, or led him into courses that proved injurious to his dignity, aroused in him instantly the fury of a king of the beasts. No friendship, however old, survived a suspicion on Swift's part that it had rendered him undignified, nor was there ever forgiveness for those who disdained his virtues or failed to recognise his services. His contempt for the Irish people was limitless, but when kings, ministers and high-born friends left him in the lurch, he became the leader of the very rabble he most despised. He did not fight for their liberties because he loved them but because they were absolutely obedient to his commands. The people's liberty was the Dean's authority.

The Uses of Wit

SIR HAROLD WILLIAMS says that we can never understand Swift's life properly if we do not study the three volumes of his poetry: this advice is absolutely correct. Yet Middleton Murry tells us that "as self-description" the half-dozen early poems are "unique" —that never again does Swift "uncover himself so much." And this, too, is quite true, although it may seem to contradict the first authority. The early poems show us a young amateur deeply and personally tangled up in his material; the later poems show a practised professional who has learnt to stand off at a distance and express even his strongest feelings with impersonal cunning. For, once Swift has settled on satire as his instrument, an immense change comes into his life; and if satire was to be the cause of his worse disappointments in life, it was also to be the cause of his living that particular life at all.

For satire brings a peculiar sort of dignity into the life of an idealistic man whose dream is of a time long past. So long as he is struggling to hymn old virtues and departed heroes he is a man whose life is spent in a romantic dream which is not of the world in which he lives. The virtues and heroes in question may be valid and honourable ones, but since they have departed utterly from the scene of the present day they exist only as nostalgic convictions in the mind of the writer, who, in effect, must absent himself from the present and retire into an imagined past. But once this same man seizes upon the satirical method, he becomes a man of his own day, directing his full power against the world as it actually exists. He need never say openly: "I stand here for the reign of Charles the Martyr"—and be dismissed as an old-fashioned romantic; he has only to examine carefully and castigate the nasty examples of subsequent degeneration—and be accepted as both up-to-date and highly efficient. Moreover, if his cunning is great, as Swift's was, he can speak with the calculated disdain of an anonymous observer and, by this art, put a dignified distance between himself and his enemies. If his ridicule is feared by the living, he will be too much of a present menace to be relegated to a place among the dead, and the respect he commands by virtue of the power at his disposal cannot fail to give him calmness and self-assurance when he mixes with the sophisticated world. The author of the *Ode to Sancroft* can command, at most, the sympathy of the good-hearted; but the author of *A Tale of a Tub* can give the world a strong shake and, for better or worse, prove himself a man to be reckoned with.

Swift understood this very well. "They may talk of the *"you-know-what"* (he means *A Tale of a Tub*) he wrote in the *Journal to Stella*, "but, gad, if it had not been for that, I should never have been able to get the access I have had...." Nor, one may add, would he have been a suitable person to mix with the great and engage in their affairs. His ideals commanded their affection, but his satirical pen demanded that the affection be mixed with extreme respect. For the wit, we must remember, must do service for a carriage and six horses.

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THESE POINTS are important, too, respecting Swift's life with Sir William Temple. Swift was ten years, on and off, with Temple, and it is reasonable enough to believe that daily contact with Temple and his world gave considerable polish to Swift and taught him how to deal confidently and urbanely with important people. We may also credit Temple with having taught Swift a great deal about how to write good prose, for Swift never lost his admiration for Temple's writing and, even in old age, recommended it as a model. But we should not, perhaps, attribute to Temple a sophisticated assurance in Swift that came to him, more probably, through his discovery of his satirical power. Even if we accept Macaulay's guess and see a churlish Swift shambling up the drive to Moor Park in heavy brogues, to depart years later a polished man-of-the-world—which is how the cinema would show it, of course—we must still remind ourselves that if the influence of Temple supplied the social experience and polish, *A Tale of a Tub* created the self-confidence. For Swift is, above all, a wit, and though introductions to the King and revelations of high society can be extremely useful to a nervous, ambitious beginner, they cannot hope to give him the serene aplomb that is satire's sweetest gift to idealism.

The Terrible Tory

WHAT *was* Swift like as a young man? We long to see some physical image of him—some portrait or pen-picture of a creature that walked and talked, and laughed and struggled. Was the abundant energy there from the beginning, and if it was, what sort of personal appearance did it make?

But it is useless to ask, because nobody can answer: we have nothing but little hints. Swift says that as a student, he was of a "cold temper and unconfined humour" and was told once "that my mind was like a conjured spirit, that would do mischief if I would not give it employment." The Earl of Orrery, his first biographer, says that the young Swift suffered from a "moroseness of temper" which "rendered him very unacceptable to his companions [at Trinity College]" so that he was "little regarded and less loved." Such descriptions have their use because we can trace from them the grim characteristics that led, with age and frustration, to the fierce, indignant Dean we know so well. The trouble is that we know this "character" *too* well and are apt to think it is true and complete. Even the earliest portrait, painted when Swift was in his thirties, presents a very square, unyielding face, with so slight a suggestion of cordiality in the features that the most we could give it by way of a caption would be Orrery's words: "He was sour and severe, but not absolutely ill-natured." As time passes, and the young wit becomes a Dean and a patriot, the face lengthens into high austerity and clerical propriety, while legend plays about the long wig in the shape of swooping cherubs bearing ribbons of graceful inscription: one would not imagine that the dignitary before one was turning out some of his least-dignified verses at the time. When the wig is stripped off at last, in Orrery's frontispiece, and we see suddenly a Churchillian head shaped like a cannon-ball, and fronted by beetle brows, bulbous eyes and a decisive but curiously pendulous nose, we feel more than ever that we have looked upon the rancorous energy and the pugnacity but been deprived entirely of the punster who said that Alexander the Great derived his name from a fondness for fried eggs (All Eggs Under the Grate) and that Aristophanes had too much "Airy Stuff in 'is" head.

That a certain front was kept up we may deduce from the fact that Swift never laughed, preferring, contrary to the rest of humanity, to suck in his cheeks rather than expand them when he enjoyed a joke: this, of course, is what irony *is*. But he seems to have been excellent company, very fond of being among women, and to have spent at least half his time in humorous amusement—"nor showed the parson in his gait and face." Orrery even says that he once raced a fellow-parson to church, winning by an aisle's length and horrifying the congregation; he also says that when Swift found his church empty save for his clerk, Roger, he proceeded promptly with the service, saying "Dearly beloved ROGER, the scripture moveth you and me in sundry places..." and so on to the very end. Of course, one cannot vouch for such stories, but one can vouch for the fact that the Earl was shocked repeatedly by the Dean, because the Earl says so and, like so many after him, feels that Swift's religion came much too close to ribaldry. Orrery, like most of us, found it hard to see in one person the divine who preached so authoritively "in a strong, nervous voice" and the priest who appeared at times to be a leaf from the pages of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. He was also as puzzled

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as Dr. Johnson was by Swift's extreme passion for long walks: when he went to England, he "often went in a waggon" but "more frequently walked from Holyhead to Leicester, London, or any other part.... He generally chose to dine with waggoners, hostlers, and persons of that rank; and he used to lie at night in houses where he found written over the door *Lodgings for a Penny*."

> He delighted in scenes of low life.... The vulgar dialect was not only a fund of humour for him, but I verily believe was acceptable to his nature; otherwise I know not how to account for the many filthy ideas, and indecent expressions... that will be found throughout his works.

OF COURSE, NO YOUNG MAN who has been to a University need go to waggoners and hostlers for filthy ideas and indecent expressions; but we should not, simply for this reason, dismiss Orrery's report as romantic. There is no doubt that all through *A Tale of a Tub* we feel we are reading a man who knows something about vulgar life as it is led by those who are born to it. Covering great distances, whether afoot or on horseback, was a lifelong obsession: if the weather was too foul, the Dean would run repeatedly up and down the Deanery stairs. *Lodgings for a Penny* suggests the man who was poor most of his life, loved economy and, at the height of his power with the Queen's ministers, was still in lodgings and would carefully pick the unburned coals off his bedroom fire when he went to bed, to save them for the next day. As for the "vulgar dialect," it was most certainly a fund of humour for him: what he most abominated in polite society, he most enjoyed outside it; it was always his relief from his own severity. When he satirised the powerful, he loved to do so by pulling them down to the level of the vulgar, implying that this was the appropriate level for persons who had betrayed all that birth, breeding, riches and power could give them. Their swinishness, their poxes, their boozing and gutsing indicated the course that their castigation should take: if they would not uphold propriety, they would be treated with none.

And though we can never hope to understand Swift, or put him neatly together under a particular heading, we can at least see that what he satirised was present in himself, and that it took very little to swing him violently from culture to coarseness and from dignity to savagery. The High Churchman who ridicules the Dissenters does so with an "enthusiasm" that would shock any Presbyterian; the upholder of the "golden mean" supports, really, nothing but one of his own more amiable moods. If we refuse to accept Swift as an idealist of dignity and a man of rigid, passionate principles, we cannot hope to understand why he is driven so easily by any betrayal of these into the most scabrous rages and revengeful emotions. His wiser friends understood this very well and refused flatly to credit the misanthrophy and disdain of the human race that we, to-day, believe to have been true of Swift. "If you despised the world as much as you pretend, and perhaps believe," Bolingbroke tells him coolly, "you would not be so angry with it."

WE ARE FAR LESS understanding in this matter to-day. We allow no distinction to be made between the person of Swift and the art of Swift. When Gulliver's revulsion extends at last to the whole human race we reject not only the fictitious conclusion but the man who wrote it. We react to *A Tale of a Tub* in exactly the spirit of Queen Anne, denying the possibility that so much coarseness and vehemence can be expressed by a priest who is truly religious. In this way, we not only deny the writer of fiction his need to push satire as far as it will go, but deny the priest his right to uphold a High Church orthodoxy in the teeth of his enemies. When certain of the saints assure us that we are a good-for-nothing pack of scoundrels and mere belly-bags of excrement, disgusting in the Lord's sight, we not only regard them as indubitably pious but point to their disgust as evidence of their piety; similarly, when Dante shows us over Hell and points out our human flesh being boiled or frozen stiff, we respond with a high respect for the poet and a mournful acceptance of his message. That we should refuse to do as much for Swift is very unimaginative on our part and very unjust to him: we carry on down through the centuries precisely the disapproval that ruined him when he was alive. While this is the greatest possible tribute to his continuing power, it is also evidence of our continuing inability to see an honest relationship between satire and religion. It is not the humour we mind, for we accept that readily enough in the *Praise of Folly* and admire Erasmus the more for it. Nor is it the bawdy, for we are prepared to come to terms with *Gargantua and*

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Pantagruel and see how a priest may become a sort of Friar Tuck without basic loss of piety. What we cannot accept is a mind more sophisticated than Rabelais' and more ferocious than Erasmus': it is the blending of the Church Militant with the "vigorous fancy" that distresses us: we cannot trust the orthodoxy because we distrust the overwhelming energy behind it: Murry even goes so far as to insist that "a hierarchy of values cannot be maintained in the presence of the comic spirit" and that Swift "never wrote anything more patently absurd than when, in 1709, he attempted to excuse *A Tale of a Tub* as a service done to the Church of England."

THE ANSWER TO THIS is that though God has always had definite limitations imposed upon His behaviour by those who believe in Him, to-day He is particularly circumscribed and many of the duties He performed in the past are no longer considered to be consonant with His honour and glory. He has for some time now been so fixedly on the watch for the fall of the sparrow that we can no longer imagine Him in the more aquiline role that was once considered fitting to His dignity. It was the Dissenters that began the "levelling" process of Divinity that seems natural to-day and to whose hearts and minds God dispatched confidential information about His secret wishes and dearest hopes—and it is precisely to those Dissenters and their descendants of to-day that Swift opposes himself, expressing horror at the idea of God's being made party to the discreditable wrangles and self-centred tumults of degenerate priests—an impropriety which he compares very nicely to the use of the *deus ex machina* in cheap theatricals:

> For, I think, it is in life as in tragedy, where it is held a conviction of great defect, both in order and invention, to interpose the assistance of praeternatural power, without an absolute and last necessity. . . . Who that sees a little paltry mortal, droning, and dreaming, and drivelling to a multitude, can think it agreeable to common good sense, that either Heaven or Hell should be put to the trouble of influence or inspection, upon what he is about?

This has much to tell us about Swift's attitude to human behaviour. His God cannot be said to be "in our hearts and in our understanding"; on the contrary, the immensity of His mercy is shown by the patience He displays towards hearts and understandings which ignore His existence or fly it as the pennant of their egoism. Moreover, in nothing has God shown greater mercy than in having deigned not only to sketch out the necessary rules of human conduct but even to promise salvation to those who are prepared to obey them. In a sense, therefore, God's work has already been done, and done with the utmost magnanimity: to involve Him in the shabby and contemptible irreverences that constitute most human behaviour is the degraded, theatrical trick of "dramatists" who are too stupid or too depraved to work according to His rules: they invoke God precisely because they refuse to be responsible for their own acts. And on the rare occasions when they recognise their corruptions of the rules and admit to their transgressions, they are no less irresponsible, in that they then bring on stage an *infernal* machine and produce the Devil as smartly as before they produced God:

> *The Devil ready stands, my Swift,*
> *To help our fancy at a Lift . . .*
> *So when poor* Irish rapparee,
> *Is sentenc'd to the fatal* Tree,
> *Or naughty Boy elopes from School,*
> *Or pretty Miss has play'd the Fool,*
> *And crack'd her tender* Maidenhead
> *With lying on too hard a Bed;*
> *Their loads they all on* Satan *lay:*
> *The Devil did the Deed, not they!*
> (A Panegyric on Dean Swift)

AND YET, as Swift is never tired of declaring, the Divine rules are of the simplest and plainest sort: they demand obedience, but no particular intelligence, and certainly no art. Indeed, the evidence, Swift suggests, shows clearly that God has taken care not to make His rules too difficult for the Lilliputians whom He has condescended to guide. The laws of good government, for example, are of the simplest kind: government, Swift insists, demands nothing in the way of brains and acuteness and has been so nicely adjusted by Providence to the capacities of ordinary persons that it suffers, rather than benefits, when talented men bring their ingenuity to bear upon its simplicity. If "Politicks are nothing but Corruptions," this is only because the politician's beginnings and ends are calculated rejections of the laws of God and are based upon arts of cunning inspired solely by human ambition and vanity. Swift says we deem it *necessary* to befoul the simplicity of things in order to show that we are extraordinary: goodness disappoints our love of ostentation. ("Harry Killigrew said to Lord Wharton 'You would not swear at this rate, if you

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thought you were doing GOD Honour!' ") An excellent example of the way it continues to disappoint us is the attitude we take towards Martin, the representative of approximate goodness in *A Tale of a Tub*. Save for his goodness, Martin is, as Murry complains, "a nonentity." He keeps his father's coat in the best possible shape. Instead of ranting with Jack and vaunting it with Peter, he has little to say: "he is simply a negation—not Jack and not Peter." We may complain, justly, that such a character is a *theatrical* disappointment, but perhaps we should admit also that we find him a *human* disappointment as well. For we have no desire to resemble Martin. Goodness has not the exciting qualities of evil; we depend on the latter to make life interesting. That, as Swift saw, is the principal reason why it is usually so beastly.

If a man begins with the assumption that goodness is boring—which it usually is—there is no limit to which he will not go in order to avoid it. All Swift's satire is directed against the hundreds of ways which human beings have discovered of avoiding being good; all his benevolence goes to those who have resisted the ostentation of being bad—who would rather be a mere negation of evil than a distinguished example of it. When we protest against such a point of view, scorning it as passive and uninteresting, we not only show our disdain for goodness, but make ourselves, without knowing it, the essential object of satire. To appreciate thoroughly what Swift is doing, we must never read him without appreciating fully our settled determination to make our lives supply him with the material from which his books are made.

IT MAY BE THOUGHT that Swift shows intolerance in this matter and has no proper right to denounce badness so haughtily. So, one must stress the fact that he is, on the contrary, as magnanimous as is the God in which he believes. Swift is not a Pelagian; he would be disgusted by the very idea that human beings might achieve the perfection of Christ. He asks no more than a bare recognition of the moral superiority of goodness and a strong effort to pursue it: this, surely, is not asking too much. The more he mixes with the world, the less good he expects it to be and the less goodness he asks of its inhabitants: the spirit of the *Ode to Sancroft* is soon dropped, because it demands far too much. Swift does not expect any Christian actually to *be* a Christian; he only suggests that they should keep a Christian aim in mind and practise a minimal amount of it. If they find this too much, he is prepared to compromise and suggest that they try merely to go through the motions of Christianity: if they do this regularly, he thinks, they may one day understand what it is they are doing, and what began as clockwork may end by being heartfelt.

Kings, Swift says, can be a great help in this matter, because by choosing as ministers men who go through the motions of Christianity, they can convince the ambitious that Christianity is no stumbling-block in the way of greatness. Moreover, once this form of preferment has become customary and the king finds himself forever surrounded by Christian ministers, there is a chance that even the king may become a Christian too. Should this happen, the teachings of Christ might move mountains; for Christianity could not fail to become all the rage if the figure of Christ were upheld not merely by the Head of the Church but by the Prince of Courtiers. An idle dream, this, however; for Swift knows that if it is difficult for the ordinary subject to become more than a nominal Christian, the difficulties in the way of the king must be insuperable. We cannot ask a man who has lived all his life from the cradle onwards in an atmosphere of total corruption to reach the decent status of a grocer.

IT IS AT THIS POINT that we should begin to obtain relish and delight from Swift's satire, for we are here at the very centre of its ingenious web. We know before we read him that he is in the true line of high satire—that like Aristophanes and Juvenal his aim is to reform the "knights" and "emperors" of the world and improve society from the top: this means, of course, that the "highest" must struggle to *rise* to the level of the "lowest." We regard him very properly as a High Church Tory and as one who upholds the existing order of his world, but we appreciate very little the price which Swift demands of the mighty for his advocacy on their behalf.

For Swift says, like a hundred other High Churchmen, that each man must be content with his lot and that all must swear allegiance to their rightful king; but his reasons for demanding this orthodox stability and the arguments he presents for loyalty and quiescence show such horrible contempt for lords and princes that those great men, were they clever

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enough to understand what Swift was doing, would find any social rebel of a radical persuasion infinitely less menacing than so terrible a Tory. The king must be supported—but why? Because he is too contemptible a creature to support himself: his condition is so degraded and pitiful, his mind and body so warped and ailing, that no good-hearted subject can see his predicament without wishing to extend to him a loyalty that springs as much from mercy as from a wish for social stability. The peers about the king must never be envied or resented by the long-suffering poor—but why? Again, because their lot is so miserable and contemptible: they are men doomed to go through life without knowledge of the common decencies and afflicted even unto death with the sourest miseries that selfishness and wanton stupidity can provide.

Clothes & Headmasters

THE STUDENT of Swift could, if he pleased, describe all Swift's opinions in terms of *nakedness* and *clothing*. Naked we come into the world, naked we go out of it: in between that beginning and that end, we cover ourselves. The Lord gives us a bare skin; what we hang on it is of human art and must not be attributed to our Maker. Since we are more sophisticated about covering ourselves than our aboriginal fathers were, we must expect our efforts to show some absurd signs of human artifice: these we must not only keep to a minimum but keep to a minimum which is not too noticeable. For, if vanity and ambition are evident in ostentatious plumage, they are equally evident in the flaunting of shabby rags—what the coxcomb achieves by means of one extreme, the canting Dissenter achieves by its opposite. This is one of the prettiest touches in *A Tale of a Tub*: the mob fails to distinguish between Peter's gaudy plumage and John's lurid tatters. Swift took this little story from an anecdote about Diogenes the Stoic (who *lived* in a tub!) and it pleased him not only because it suited his ideas but because the whole business of clothing fascinated him all his life. As Dean of St. Patrick's he was a friend and adviser to all sorts of artificers in Dublin, but it was the weavers he loved best and helped most; and it was as a "Drapier" that he chose to speak to "the Whole People of Ireland." We are never far from cloth, scissors, and thread in *Gulliver's Travels*—little tailors and their assistants climb over the huge body of the Man-Mountain in Lilliput and contrive to take his measure and stitch him a suit; in Brobdingnag, the silks of that country hang like ponderous woollens upon the little mannikin, though they make, for giants, "a very grave and decent habit." The intellectuals of Laputa express their metaphysics through the absurdity of their garments: in the world of the Houyhnhnms, rabbit skins and the pelt of the *nnuhnoh* make adequate suits and stockings, while for the stout soles of shoes there are "the skins of *Yahoos* dried in the sun."

CLOTHING IS necessary to man. It is not only necessary for warmth and comfort, it is necessary as an aid to civilised behaviour. The human body is a gross thing; it exudes the physical beast in man just as "Liberty of conscience" exudes the beastliness of heart. When Christianity is absent, the appearance of it must be put on; and so long as the body provides evidence of the animal, it, too, must be given a fair cover. This fact is acknowledged not only by the prudish Swift but by the ladies and gentlemen of his society who spend most of their lives pretending, through artifice, to be other than what they are. We may scorn such an attitude to-day, but we share it nonetheless: very few of us obtain much pleasure from sweat and excrement, and though from time to time we make valuable sorties back into "Nature," the bath always wins in the end; by now, in fact, it has rendered nakedness tolerable and even pleasing. But in eras of rotten teeth, dirty skins, and smelly close-stools, our naked selves lacked many of the attractions they present to-day, and the disparity between man naked and man clothed provides endless satisfaction to the satirist. Nor does he need to reflect very long upon this disparity without seeing that it is simply one example of an overall disparity—of the great general gap that separates man plain and man ornamented. The wise and civilised man is at pains always to mend this gap as unobtrusively as possible; he keeps his body in good repair by living soberly, and he chooses for its covering a habit of like sobriety. The unlettered countryman often achieves much the same simple end by living in ignorance of fashion and by lacking the money to defeat his simplicity. But once a man has got a little foothold in a more sophisticated and voguish world, all manner of clothing becomes necessary to his vanity. Neither his body nor his soul is safe

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from the artifices he employs on it: the gap, to him, is not between animal nakedness and human decency, but between what is commonplace and what is admired. A vast, world-wide charade smothers all human simplicity and dignity and leaves nothing unaffected by its vanity and presumption. This is the world that Swift sees and by which he is obsessed—and this is the world to which he retorts by reminding it with incessant ferocity and in the foulest language of the exudations and stinks that lie below the silks and plumage. The ostentatious artifice becomes a glaring denial of the truth, the existence of which is no longer recognised by the lady who has spent five hours obliterating it.

> *She knows her Early Self no more,*
> *But fill'd with Admiration, stands,*
> *As other Painters oft adore*
> *The Workmanship of their own Hands.*
> (The Progress of Beauty)

The beau, who sees this vision passing in her carriage, accepts it as the real self—as well he may. For he has hidden his own pox under gaudy breeches and can deny, with ruffles, wig, and silk cravat, the decayed animal within. Yet there must always come that awful night when both charlatans, stripped suddenly of their respective duplicities, must appear to one another in all their natural rottenness and physical debasement.

SWIFT has described this moment of disillusion so often and so grossly that in the end he makes us think *more* kindly of the masquerading wretches—just as we think *more* of the Dissenter, once Swift has knelt upon him: the satirical punishment is far more terrible than its object. But we get more sense of proportion, more understanding of his ferocity, if we take our eyes off its particular victims and realise that a general condition is being attacked.* False plumage and its ostentatious lies appear more strikingly in the form of clothes, paint, and ornaments, but these pretences are only superficial evidences of much deeper corruptions. The beau who falsifies the naked truth of his body is the divine who corrupts the Gospels with his fashionable glosses. He is the courtier who prefers the polished lie to the plain statement, the fop who hides his mental defectiveness in a voguish vocabulary. He is the bishop whose lawn sleeves have been bought out of the stipends of poor curates; he is the king who prefers flattery to honesty. He is the politician who has learnt how to disguise greed as a service to the nation and put a show of efficiency upon dishonesty. The painted belle with the dirty body is not only disgusting in herself; she is also the vehicle that passes down the generations all the pretences, vanities, and vapid aims that make social degeneration a fixed condition. If she excites Swift's particular horror it is because she must feign so much if she is to be a lady instead of a woman; modesty must be discarded in favour of prudery; the vixen of bedroom intrigue must be shocked by any suggestion of coarseness and pretend to as much terror in the presence of a man as she would at the sight of a mouse. And these hypocrisies must reach an extreme of disgustingness when she makes her pious devotions to religion:

> *In Church, secure behind her Fan*
> *She durst behold that Monster, Man: . . .*
> *Or on that Matt devoutly kneeling*
> *Would lift her Eyes up to the Ceiling,*
> *And heave her Bosom unaware*
> *For neighb'ring Beaux to see it bare.*

Swift deals with this as many still deal with a puppy—as it scampers prettily from the living-room, he seizes it, drags it back on to the carpet and rubs its nose in that which it has bequeathed to posterity. His insistence on doing this, and the satisfaction he gets from it, have worried all his admirers from Orrery to Middleton Murry: the latter has even suggested that towards the end of his life, Swift was obsessed by an "excremental vision." This conclusion is too romantic. Obscenity is always one of Swift's retorts to degeneracy and he makes it more frequently as he grows older and more desperate. But he has many other ways of retorting: his satire is very extensive and his medicines are never monotonous. It is we ourselves who fix so much attention on its excremental expressions, in part because they shock us but also because we tend to believe nowadays that in studying an author's character we should look to the excrement if we are to find the fundament. It would be absurd to deny that Swift pelted prudes with turds, but no four-letter word obsessed him more than "Scot."

THE NATURE of Swift's god has more to tell us about his character than his indecencies have. If, to him, there is always a

* "Proper *satire* is distinguished, by the generality of the reflections, from a *lampoon* which is aimed against a particular person; but they are too frequently confounded." (Johnson's *Dictionary*.)

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horrible gap between the honest man and the degenerate man, there is a far greater one between even the best of men and the Creator, added to which there is little in the way of an intermediating Christ. As we have seen, Swift refuses to involve either God or the Devil in the affairs of the human race; both have stated their case and done their work; the rest is up to human beings themselves. Not only is Swift's God quite out of bounds of human cognisance, He is also virtually put on the shelf. He may not be discussed, His nature may not be speculated upon; He is a closed book that exists, practically speaking, only in the few chapters of rules and revelations that He has vouchsafed to man. Such a god is a perfectly defensible God, and it is easy to see that one might wish to stress His remoteness in a period when evangelical enthusiasm is making for too much intimacy. But just as Swift's satire is often too tremendous for the petty vices it satirises, so is his God almost disproportionately great for the little creatures He has made. They are allowed no connection with Him at all; they are scarcely urged to pray to Him for strength. Only His laws exist, as it were, and almost the whole duty of His priest is to keep the chickens' noses to the chalked lines.

Two points concerning this "Mosaic" God deserve special attention. The first is that since He presides only in the form of His plain laws, no metaphysics and only the minimum of theology can be allowed in regard to Him. Religious speculation is not merely a mistake but an evil, in that it diverts the mind from practical obedience into meaningless abstractions. For the same reason, all philosophy must be of a severely practical sort: a man may ask: *"Quid est imperium?"*—"What is government?"—but once he asks: "What is contained in the idea of government?" he embarks on a sort of enquiry that is pernicious because it is essentially misdirected. Swift traced the beginnings of the iniquitous habit to John Locke and was able, in consequence, to class it with all other degenerations that had occurred since the time of Charles I. But we, taking a broader view, may see it as a much older quarrel—the old quarrel between satirist and philosopher that is found in *The Clouds*. To the philosopher, the satirist is not a thinker at all; to the satirist, the philosopher is one who has no serious interest in religion and morality. Swift's intelligence was unsuited in every way to philosophical considerations—and the God in whom he believed was exactly like himself, a very plain-speaking person to whom theologians were entirely abhorrent.

THIS IS ILLUSTRATED very exactly by the second point respecting Swift's God—His view of charity. For most of us, now, charity is a wide conception of general outlook: as "caritas" or "compassion" it describes an attitude to life, a necessary emotion, rather than a law of practical behaviour. The State supplies assistance to those who are in need; the charity supplied by us is mainly sympathetic, forgiving, and affectionate. But where we are broad, emotional, and vague, Swift was limited and strictly practical. He saw charity almost entirely in terms of money, and in obedience to God's demands he practised charity generously in his lifetime and left all his money to charity after his death. Yet his life was not an example of what we call "charitable impulses." It was severe, dogmatic, unimpartial, and unforgiving. We, who compassion all mankind more readily than we give cheques to individual persons, are puzzled by a man who found it hard to forgive but was ready to fork out. Ours, we feel, is the religious attitude; the Dean's charity is simply philanthropy.

Clearly, there are weaknesses on both sides in these different views of charity. Our own view is a perfect target for satire, for we become most certainly satirical objects when we spend our compassion limitlessly but keep a firm hold on our cash: we might almost be accused of spending the one in order to keep the other. But once we have admitted this we are free to say that the reverse is also true and that the spirit of charity is not fulfilled if we spend money in order to save our emotions. It would be unjust to say that this was what Swift did, but when we consider both the remoteness of his God and the strictly practical nature of his charity we do suspect that both attitudes were those of a man who found emotional expenditure extremely painful and preferred to withhold it in his relations to both God and man. This was not because he was a cold man, but because when his feelings were strongly affected—as they often were—his will-power and self-command disappeared and he was plunged into the chaos of unmanageable emotion. That is why he hews so strictly to the Law and does his utmost to impose on himself and others an order and discipline that will prevent emotional anarchy. This stringency may seem regrettable

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in his personal life, particularly in regard to his relations with women; and yet, it is the quality that makes him our greatest satirist. For it is not Swift's native energy and capacious indignation that gives power to his prose; this power comes from the tightness with which it is ordered—the way in which the most violent feeling is subjected and constricted, so that instead of welling out in an aimless flood, like a fact of nature or a furious letter to a newspaper, it is made to work, like a fireman's hose, obtaining velocity and accuracy from that which confines it: this, surely, is the meaning of Goethe's famous dictum: *"In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister."*

When the emotion behind the art is merely amused or contemptuous, the strictures which are laid upon it are proportionately light and easy, as in the *Bickerstaff Papers* or the amiable irony of *An Argument against Abolishing Christianity*: he smiled as he wrote; we smile as we read. But when the emotions begin to boil, every effort is made to tie them into the narrowest possible form of expression: the more monstrous the feeling, the more refined the vein. The horror of the *Modest Proposal* is *in* the modesty with which the proposal is uttered: the tone of it is most beautifully tentative: we are dealing, it appears, with a good man who thinks it would be a good thing to eat babies but will drop the idea immediately if anyone can think of one or two sensible reasons why it should not be done. The same horror, tied with metrical exactitude and silky soliloquy, is shown by the great poem *On Dreams*, wherein Swift reflects that what we do by day, we dream by night:

> *For, when in Bed we rest our weary limbs,*
> *The Mind unburthen'd sports in various whims,*
> *The Busy Head with mimick Arts runs o'er*
> *The Scenes and Actions of the Day before....*
>
> *The Soldier smiling hears the Widow's Cries*
> *And stabs the Son before the Mother's Eyes.*
> *With like Remorse his Brother of the Trade,*
> *The Butcher, feels the Lamb beneath his blade....*
>
> *The kind Physician grants the Husband's Prayers,*
> *Or gives Relief to long-expecting Heirs.*
> *The sleeping Hangman ties the fatal Noose,*
> *Nor unsuccessful waits for dead Men's Shoes....*

When Swift loses this constrictive control, or refuses deliberately to make use of it, his power disappears at once. Letters between friends, for instance, he believed should be written artlessly —"never lean[ing] upon my elbow," as he puts it: consequently, his letters are always a pleasure but rarely an expression of formidable energy. The same dissipation marks those poems in which the restraint was not adequate to the pressure; and it is very marked, of course, in the splenetic outbursts and revulsions of his personal life. For when Swift loses control his feelings become unmanageable and he loses everything that is most dear to him; dignity, stability, charity, commonsense are swept away by rage, revenge, suspicion, and spite. He becomes at once the easy target of cooler heads and can be made to look very silly by those who have the courage to answer him back or the magnanimity to refuse to quarrel with him.

To look silly is certainly the last thing Swift wants. His position, his independence, his dignity all depend on his authority being accepted and respected by others. This will not be the case if *either* party to the arrangement is a slave to passion and turbulent emotion. Hence the necessity of inflexible rules of behaviour, which the Dean struggles to impose not only on himself but on the whole society in which he lives. Hence, too, a God who is above all a law-maker —a God of discipline whose other attributes should be of no concern to human beings.

THIS GOD IS a familiar figure in England; so is his prophet. Both belong more to the educational field than the religious one, which is what gives them a more earthly than Heavenly quality. Our Dean's religion need never be doubted, but it may be seen as the sort of religion that inspires great headmasters. These awe-inspiring teachers may derive their authority from God, but they give their whole attention to the behaviour of their pupils. Their interest is not in speculating upon the Law-giver but in obtaining human obedience to His rules. Salvation is not within the headmaster's province, but instruction is, and so is discipline. Most headmasters have only a school of children, but all England was Swift's school, and all his children were grown people. In actual children he was usually uninterested: his teaching was only for those that were old enough to benefit from it. True children he bore with as an inevitable nuisance.

We have no difficulty in understanding *furious* headmasters. They are out of fashion now, but until recently they were an essential part of education. We find nothing odd or mysterious in the fact that when they were obeyed they were urbane, dignified, impressive, and agreeable, but that disobedience turned

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them into punitive fiends. The man to whom authority is of the first importance is the man most tempted to behave outrageously when his authority is rejected. His violence does not recognise normal bounds because his sense of authority, too, is of an abnormal sort. The pupil who calls him a "just beast" makes the phrase memorable because it unites so aptly words that would stand normally in strict opposition to one another.

Can we doubt that Swift was such a man? In what other sort of person can we unite moral authority and abnormal violence?

Lemuel Gulliver & Robinson Crusoe

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS represents a magnificent triumph of will and state of mind. It begins with the will-power only partly roused and being employed with extreme grace, wit, and subtlety; it ends with the will at its most vehement and monstrous, reflecting in this development the author's own march from his old self to his new one. It does not give the impression of having been planned as it stands from the start; on the contrary, it suggests that each part inspired its successor and that the appetite grew with the feeding—a hunger for greater intensity and more powerful amplification being felt more and more strongly as the work proceeded. A great deal has been written about its originating in the ideas and table-talk of Swift and his London friends, but without questioning the correctness of this ascription, must we not also allow *Robinson Crusoe*, which appeared in 1719, some of the honour of having set it going? We cannot do so with any firmness, unfortunately, but we can certainly use the one book as a point of departure for the other; for the two, seen side by side, form a wonderful pair, representing two sorts of writing, two entirely disparate views of fiction, and two superbly opposed authors. To describe *Gulliver's Travels* as Swift's deliberate retort to *Robinson Crusoe* would be unwarranted, but if we amuse ourselves by considering it as such, the result is as informative as it is entertaining. Moreover, we never see Swift more clearly than in relation to Defoe: each demands the presence of the other, in the sense that each side demands the presence of the other if we are to understand a battle, a Parliamentary conflict, a divided nation.

DEFOE EMBODIES everything that Swift hates: he is the other half of England that Swift struggled all his life to suppress or ignore and by which he was defeated and driven into isolation. Defoe, with his brickworks and bankruptcies, is the rising small business man whom Swift saw very correctly as the man who would unseat his timocracy of landed gentlemen and substitute an economy of stocks and shares for one of estate and title. He is the Roundhead Dissenter to whom the Whigs run as an ally in their fight with the Tories of the Established Church—and, by turning to him, change what was formerly a private quarrel between Anglican landlords into a lasting division between regicide Puritan merchants and honourable county squires. Swift is the gentleman-author whose chosen home is society and the dignified sphere of the well-educated and well-born; Defoe is the born gander of Grub Street, the father of all that is noisiest and freest in modern journalism. Defoe is liberty in the form in which Swift detested it most: he is the rogue whom Swift loved best to "swinge" and his life is a constant, rapscallionly muddle, bursting with excitements and devoid of all dignity. Where Swift goes in danger of the Tower, Defoe's natural punishment is the pillory: the higher place is reserved for the treasonable gentleman, the lower for the provocative hack. The two men have only three things in common: the first is that they both took service under Robert Harley, Swift as open propagandist and Defoe as secret informer; the second is that they were both passionately in favour of the educating of women; and the third is that both were capable of satire. We expect satire from a Tory like Swift, but we are surprised and interested to find it in a scurrilous Whig. Yet Defoe's *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, the satirical essay for which he was put in the pillory, anticipates exactly in tone and tendency Swift's *Modest Proposal* for dealing with surplus Irishmen: the only real differences between the two essays is that Defoe's makes its plea for the mutilating of Dissenters in rather a blunt way, whereas Swift's plea for eating babies is made with the refinement and gentility that we expect from a clergyman of the better class.

Of the two, Defoe is by far the more sympathetic and agreeable man and fits most happily to-day into the excessively unaustere society that composes our democracy. He is the beginning of the social struggle of which we are the end, and he presses forward into modern times proportionately as Swift fights backward into

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the time behind him. When we hold each man's masterpiece in our hands, we hold the halves of one apple—the apple of discord that, in its wholeness, represents the England of the early 18th century.

ROBINSON CRUSOE has been called aptly "the primary textbook of capitalism"—and who can resist the amusement of reading it as such? What author ever built such a warehouse or drew up a more intriguing inventory? Every page is a merchant's catalogue of hardware, woollens, leather-goods, and crockery, and from the fields outside the warehouse comes the baaing of the good tradesman's flocks and the ripple of the breeze through his stalks of corn. All these goods, together with a snug house well-barricaded against interlopers, are available to the forceful capitalist, who, by diligent sowing of a little seed, builds his frugal investments into interest-bearing property. And how excitedly we labour with Crusoe, first for mere self-survival, later for a higher rate of interest and great abundance of possessions! How we share his horrified terror when that most magical of all moments in fiction, the footprint in the sand, tells us brutally that some barbarous intruder may imperil both life and property! And how thankful we are to know that our heroic investor does not stand alone—that his marvels of free enterprise are noted and sanctioned by God Himself! For, certainly, there never was a book in which God's hand was busier—helping in the factory, making sound economical suggestions, keeping an eye on things generally and asking nothing in return but prayers—heartfelt prayers, of course; but who would *not* pray heartily to such a generous Bank-manager? No Puritan but Bunyan ever wrote a happier book; no merchant ever looked upon his gains and declared with greater self-satisfaction that the earth was the Lord's and the glory thereof.

At the time *Robinson Crusoe* appeared, Swift was reading all the travel books he could find: they were all trash but a perfect antidote to the spleen, he assured Miss Van Homrigh. Merely to imagine him reading *Robinson Crusoe* is enough to make one laugh, for it is pleasing to picture his contemptuous response to Defoe's unceasing power to declare, in all imaginable matters, his faith in all that Swift despised. Each author, to begin with, sets out upon his "Travels" with the intention of discovering only that which he already knows and erecting in a strange land that which he knows to have been built at home. Defoe turns a primitive island into a commercial enterprise: the only enemy to this sort of civilisation is the naked savage—the terrifying cannibal whose primitive appetites threaten disaster to the God-fearing businessman. But Swift's islands are never menaced by barbarism: on the contrary, the only atrocities he finds are those of civilised, cultured persons who have degenerated grossly from the happier, natural state of man and have espoused reason only in order that "the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself." Where Defoe looks with horror at the naked footprint, Swift looks with equal horror at the imprint of the court-shoe, and Gulliver, even after being wounded by savages, would still prefer "to trust myself among these barbarians, than live with European Yahoos." The Dissenting merchant and reformer never doubts that trade and colonisation confer civilised benefits upon savage people: it is the Tory churchman who argues, with the modern radical, that colonists are no better than an "execrable crew of butchers" enjoying "a free licence . . . to all acts of inhumanity and lust."

Man himself, as he walks the world, drives the two authors to opposite poles. Defoe will have no truck with the naked body; his excitements come from the fabricating of its garments out of the available raw materials, and from its foodstuffs and implements. But the High Church Dean despises "the subject of . . . diet, wherewith other travellers fill their books," and where Defoe asks that we admire the fur hat and skin-breeches, Swift keeps pulling off these contemptible disguises and pressing our eyes and noses to the hairy warts and stenches of the flesh below. The Puritan is far too respectable even to mention the functions of the body, but the Dean's book abounds in hogsheads of urine and the voiding of excrement. This is why *Robinson Crusoe* is an essentially materialistic book and yet a wholly unphysical one, while *Gulliver's Travels* is only occasionally materialistic and always passionately physical.

THE NUMEROUS OTHER "opposites" in the two books are all very engaging and highly characteristic of their respective authors. Crusoe is a simple man of Defoe's own class; Gulliver, like Sir William Temple, is a graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Unlike Defoe's God, the Dean's is much too detached and Olympian to be involved in Gulliver's absurd

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affairs—and Gulliver himself is much too much an average gentleman to waste a moment in prayer. The Dissenter, once he has built himself a small realm abroad, delights in allowing "liberty of conscience throughout my dominions"; the Dean, however, does not lose the opportunity of requiring the monarch of Brobdingnag to assert that "a man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet, but not to vend them about for cordials."

But the most entertaining contrast between the books, from a literary point of view, is in each author's declared intention. *Robinson Crusoe* is the work of a journalist; it is essentially what we would call a "documentary," or a blunt, unpolished recital of the plain facts—yet it is of this documentary that Defoe says: "My story is a whole collection of wonders." *Gulliver's Travels*, on the other hand, *is* a whole collection of wonders—as much an imaginary creation as *Crusoe* is not and, for the most part, most admirably "turned" and polished. Yet Swift declares of it: "I could perhaps, like others, have astonished thee with strange, improbable tales; but I rather chose to relate plain matter of fact, in the simplest manner and style...." Thus does each author indulge the perfectly excusable pretence that suits his book, the journalist seeking to elevate his facts into fancy, the wit to resolve pure fantasy into facts.

Robinson Crusoe, one may say, never gets off the ground at all; apart from that magical moment of the footprint it is never touched by the imagination and asks nothing of the intellect. But *Gulliver's Travels* is a work of pure intellect, an act of unceasing invention. Defoe, patiently assembling material facts, needs forty pages of preliminaries to wreck his hero on a desert island; Swift, anxious to leave the factual world behind, carries Gulliver to Lilliput in little more than a page. Defoe, having retailed one fact, merely goes on to retail the next fact; but the chief purpose served by a fact in Swift is to be a springboard into fantasy. And nothing about *Gulliver's Travels* is more interesting than to study the way in which this fantasy is anchored—to see why, even at its most fantastic moments, it does not lose its ties with the earth. To see how Swift does this, is to see what satire must always do if its angry fantasies are to be brought safely home.

NAPOLEON, discussing at St. Helena the innovations of the French Revolution, declared himself entirely in favour of the change made by the revolutionary intellectuals to the Metric System of weights and measures. But he pointed out that the mathematicians who arranged this change made a typical academic mistake: by throwing away the old *terms*, they turned weights and measures into inhuman abstractions. The man who works with a terminology of "hands," "feet," and "ells" in effect bases all his calculations on the parts of his body: even when he speaks in terms of "poles" and "chains" he is still speaking of what he regards as extensions of his own arms. But once he must calculate in "ares" and "metres," he must lose his sense of physical conjunction with the world, and the loss of this sensuous tie, Napoleon believed, was precisely the sort of loss that always should be avoided in the modernising of human systems.

In this illuminating flash from St. Helena we see clearly one of the great strengths of *Gulliver's Travels*—the anchoring of the high-flying mind to the physical body and its everyday environment. This is not the book of an abstract "projector," calculating in a world apart; it is a book in which man *is* the measure of all things. We find this first, of course, in the simple matter of relative sizes in Lilliput and Brobdingnag, but it is the actual estimating of these proportions—the terms in which they are assessed—that is so unabstract and gives the book its fleshy solidity. Like Defoe, Swift will often tell us how small or large a thing was by giving its linear dimensions; but, unlike Defoe, he likes to put our eyes, noses, ears, and limbs into the service of his imaginings. In the huge magnifications of Brobdingnag, the purring of a cat is not described in mere adjectival sonorities; instead, it is "like that of a dozen stocking-weavers at work." An infant's cry is "a squall that you might have heard from London Bridge to Chelsea"; and twenty wasps, "as large as partridges," sweep in at the window "humming louder than the drone of as many bagpipes." The Brobdingnagian queen can "craunch the wing of a lark, bones and all, between her teeth, although it were nine times as large as that of a full-grown turkey" and her table knives are "twice as long as a scythe." Each fly is of the greatness of "a Dunstable lark" and, as it walks, demonstrates its essential monstrousness to the eye of the tiny observer by leaving behind it a lumpy track of excrement, spawn, and "viscous matter." One paring from the Queen's thumbnail serves for the back of a horn comb, bladed with "stumps of the King's

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beard"; the corn on the toe of a royal maid-of-honour is of "about the bigness of a Kentish pippin"; sliced from its owner and carried home to England, it can be "hollowed into a cup, and set in silver." Waves of overpowering stench and scent are emitted by the naked bodies of these royal maids, and each charming mole that spots the skin stands "broad as a trencher, and hairs hanging from it thicker than packthreads." The thump on the scaffold floor of a murderer's decapitated head is such as to shake the ground for "at least half an English mile," while—most astonishing simile of all—the "veins and arteries [of the trunk] spouted up such a prodigious quantity of blood, and so high in the air, that the great *jet d'eau* at Versailles was not equal for the time it lasted." Reversed in their proportions to fit the world of Lilliput, the similes are more charming than gross, but they always retain their intense, familiar quality—tiny men ploughing through Gulliver's snuff-box "up to the mid-leg in a sort of dust" and sneezing dreadfully as they go; examining letters and diaries in which every character is "almost half as large as the palm of our hands"; discovering a pocket-watch, "which the emperor was very curious to see, and commanded two of his tallest yeomen of the guards to bear it on a pole upon their shoulders, as draymen in England do a barrel of ale." "I have been much pleased," says Gulliver, "with a cook pulling a lark, which was not as large as a common fly; and a young girl threading an invisible needle with invisible silk."

THIS INTENSE PROXIMITY, this use of commonplaces to ground the imagination, has a curious effect. It is not noticed by the reader when he finds it pleasing: he merely smiles at the image without inquiring into the techniques that have made him smile. But when the simile is gross —when excrement and hairy moles replace invisible needles and snuff—he not only sees the technique but begins to wonder what sort of man the author was. Yet it should be plain that the same method is being used throughout and that there is a grand unity of treatment which covers in one way the nicest and nastiest things. For every grossness in Swift there is a corresponding delicacy—a point nicely made by Pope in his well-known lines on Swift. But whichever course, fine or gross, he chooses to take, an intensely personal intimacy lies at the core of it. The grand flights of his imagination are made plausible only by the point from which they take their departure, and this point is always the living human being and his familiar belongings, sensations, and habits. Nor is there any limit to the use of this admirable art; it can be applied not only to the coarsest and most delicate things but also to the occasions when genius displays itself by listing details in the simplest way and then turning them, without the least change of expression, to irresistibly human account:

> Their manner of writing is very peculiar, being neither from the left to the right, like the Europeans; nor from the right to the left, like the Arabians; nor from up to down, like the Chinese; but aslant, from one corner of the paper to the other, like ladies in England.

The life we share with Robinson Crusoe has no place for such extraordinary felicities. It is, in the nicest sense of the words, merely a life of gain, technical security, adventure, and everyday ingenuity; it provides neither insight into human behaviour nor interest in human thought. *Gulliver's Travels* begins where *Robinson Crusoe* ends; it enquires and reflects where the other rests content to act and possess. We see Crusoe naked only when he is afraid, but we see Gulliver in all his human weaknesses—in his fear, his vanity, his pride, his shame, his shivering little skin. Neither Gulliver nor Crusoe is of much interest as a principal character, but each is uninteresting for a different reason—Crusoe because his material possessions loom larger than he does, Gulliver because his story would have no solid centre if he himself were made as dramatically extraordinary as the situations and persons he meets: in this respect we may compare him to the plain Martin in *A Tale of a Tub*. We ask that Gulliver be a bigger man only for one reason—we cannot forgive him for surrendering to the Houyhnhnms and recognising in himself and us the beastly image of a Yahoo. And we do not forgive him for this because we shall never forgive Swift for it.

A good way to examine this matter is to compare good-humouredly the conclusions of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*. In both books, the hero is carried safe back to Europe by a kindly ship's-captain. We know the revulsion that the return to the world excites in Gulliver—how he shrinks from the touch of his own wife and children, how repugnant he finds the stench and character of the Yahoo. But we should remember, too, how different the world seems to Defoe's returning castaway. Crusoe

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finds that the world is good—indeed, that it is overflowing with probity and justice. The twenty-eight years of his absence have been devoted by his honest partners to the preservation and increase of his investments, and the totting up of the grand total, with the occasional pause for an *Ave Maria*, forms a most suitable conclusion to this best of mercantile books. Twelve hundred chests of sugar, 800 rolls of tobacco, thousands of golden Portuguese *moidores*, large Brazilian plantations worked assiduously by black slaves: it all amounts to "above £1,000 a year." And when we hear the chink of those *moidores*, do we not exclaim with Crusoe: "It is impossible to express the flutterings of my very heart when I looked over these letters and especially when I found all my wealth about me"? Do we not agree most heartily with him that "the latter end of Job was better than the beginning"? And are we at all surprised to find Job in that *galère*?

THIS IS THE HAPPY END we all want—honest men, a banker-God, and accumulated interest. Defoe never denied it even to the worst of us: once Moll Flanders ceased to be a whore and a thief and invested in probity and God, her income rose in due proportion with her piety, cementing the delights of capital to the forgiveness of sins. And because we feel that things *should* turn out like this in a novel—that money is what Job is being so patient about; that money is what Swift loses when Miss Van Homrigh dies—we are profoundly offended when Gulliver shrinks from touching us and his author, peeling us down to mere skin and claws, wipes us from his sight as contemptible Yahoos. His terrible insult has survived two centuries unimpaired: it hurts us to-day more than it hurt its first readers. Many, indeed, protest that no author who really believed in God could find it in his heart to condemn us so unkindly; others, more expert in the study of Swift, have turned the insult by tracing it to a psychological deformation in the author.

All of which has one very amusing result—that we regard *Robinson Crusoe*, which is a documentary, as an acceptable piece of fiction, but dismiss *Gulliver's Travels*, which is a pure fiction, as a libellous piece of documentary. Yet this absurd conclusion suits both authors admirably, for Defoe, as has been noted, pretended to be a teller of wonders, while Swift pretended to be a reporter of facts. The journalist set out to please his public; the Dean intended to roast it. Both authors succeeded admirably in their intentions and both are read still in the spirit in which they wrote. Both would be overjoyed to know it.

Modesties

Words as plain as hen-birds' wings
Do not lie,
Do not over-broider things—
Are too shy.

Thoughts that shuffle round like pence
Through each reign,
Wear down to their simplest sense,
Yet remain.

Weeds are not supposed to grow,
But by degrees
Some achieve a flower, although
No one sees.

Philip Larkin

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Bernard Lewis

The Quest for Freedom

A Sad Story of the Middle East

In 1878 a young Turkish diplomat called Sadullah went to see the great exhibition in Paris. In a letter describing what he saw he wrote:

> In front of the central gate there is a statue of freedom; she has a staff in her hand and is seated on a chair. Her style and appearance convey this message: "Oh worthy visitors! When you look upon this fascinating display of human progress, do not forget that all these achievements are the work of freedom. It is under the protection of freedom that peoples and nations attain happiness. Without freedom, there can be no security; without security, no endeavour; without endeavour, no prosperity; without prosperity, no happiness. . . .*

Liberty, in other words, is an essential prerequisite to the pursuit of happiness, through the intermediate stages as indicated.

In these words Sadullah was expressing a view common among Middle Eastern explorers of Europe in the nineteenth century—the view that political freedom was the secret source of Western power and success, the Aladdin's lamp with which the East might conjure up the genie of progress and win the fabulous treasures of the gorgeous and mysterious Occident.

At this point some definition of terms is necessary. Freedom and independence are often loosely used as synonyms, but should be differentiated. For the sake of clarity, we may for the moment define freedom as a political term referring to the position of the individual within the group—to the immunity of the citizen from arbitrary and illegal action by the government, and to his right to participate in the formation and conduct of government. Independence, on the other hand, refers to the position of the group in relation to other groups—to the formation and sovereignty of the state, untrammelled by any superior, alien authority. Freedom and independence are thus quite different—sometimes even mutually exclusive—things, and represent different objectives. Freedom is maintained and exercised through a form of political organisation which is, by those who practise it, now usually called democracy. It is true that in modern times the word democracy has been used with many adjectives and in many other senses—social, organic, basic, guided and popular; the neo-Marxist dictatorship of the secretariat; the unanimous plebiscitary ratification of military *res gestae*; royal affability and party public relations. Our present concern is with none of these, but with free, representative and constitutional government, and with the attempt to introduce such government in the Middle East. It is a sad story.

The idea of political freedom first appeared in the Middle East at the end of the eighteenth century, grew and developed during the nineteenth, and in most of the area died out in the middle of the twentieth.

Despite the elective doctrines of the Muslim jurists, enshrining the memories of a remote nomadic past, the political experience of the Middle East under the caliphs and sultans was one of almost unrelieved autocracy, in which obedience to the sovereign was a religious as

* In this, Sadullah Pasha is echoing an old dictum, recorded by the ninth century Arabic author Ibn Qutayba, and repeated by many subsequent Islamic authors, that "There is no rule without soldiers, no soldiers without money, no money without prosperity, no prosperity without justice and good government." The changes are significant.

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well as a political obligation, and disobedience a sin as well as a crime. Though the Muslim sovereign was an autocrat, he was not a pure despot. He was always subject, in theory and to a large extent even in practice, to the Holy Law of Islam; by the eighteenth century the effective authority of the Ottoman Sultan was limited by such entrenched and powerful groups as the *ulema*, the janissaries, and the provincial notables. There were, however, no corporate, established bodies to represent them. Islamic law knows no corporate legal persons; Islamic history shows no councils or communes, no synods or parliaments, nor any other kind of elective or representative assembly. It is interesting that the jurists never accepted the principle of majority decision—there was no point, since the need for a procedure of corporate, collective decision never arose. In heaven there was one God, and one alone; on earth there was no court but a single judge, no state but a single ruler.

THIS ANCIENT TRADITION of autocracy and acquiescence was first breached by the impact of the ideas of the French Revolution. Interest was soon aroused.

In April, 1797, the English traveller W. G. Browne had a conversation with Hasan Jumblat, a Druze chief in Kasrawan in the north Lebanon: "He was very inquisitive as to the motives and history of the French Revolution, and the present religious creed of that nation; on hearing the detail of which, he however made no interesting remarks." In the following year, with the arrival of the French in Egypt, fuller and perhaps more stimulating details were available. In Turkey the ideas of the revolution became known even earlier, and were actively propagated by the French embassy and its friends. On July 14, 1793, the French community had a solemn celebration, at which they read the Declaration of the Rights of Man, swore allegiance to the Republic, and drank the health of the French Republic and Selim III, of the soldiers of the motherland and the friends of liberty, and of universal brotherhood. The inauguration of the republican flag the following year provided the occasion for a still bigger celebration, culminating in a salute from two French ships moored off Seraglio Point. The party ended with the guests dancing a republican *carmagnole* around the tree of liberty which had been planted in the soil of Turkey, in the grounds of the French embassy.

There is no evidence that the Turks were much interested in these proceedings. But the ideas which they represented began to percolate, at first in a very limited circle, then to larger and larger groups among the intellectual *élite*. The tree of liberty bore fruit. The French Revolution was the first great movement of ideas in Europe that was not expressed in more or less Christian terms, and its doctrines could therefore spread, unhampered, through the new channels that were being opened into the world of Islam. A new generation was to grow up, fascinated by the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. It was some time before their successors decided that the first two were mutually exclusive, and the third in need of redefinition.

THE FIRST STEP in the direction of constitutional government was taken as early as 1808, when the Grand Vizier Bayrakdar Mustafa Pasha convened an assembly of dignitaries and provincial lords and notables in Istanbul; after some negotiations, they signed—and made the Sultan sign—a deed of agreement. Various interpretations have been placed on these events, which in any case came to nothing. *Ad hoc* consultative meetings, called *mashwara*, were not uncommon in the Ottoman Empire. What was new, and important, was that the "deed of agreement" was a reciprocal contract, negotiated between the Sultan and groups of his servants and subjects, in which the latter appear as independent contracting parties, receiving as well as conceding certain rights and privileges.

Consultation is recommended in the Qur'ān and was practised from time to time by sovereigns with their counsellors, officials, and courtiers. The nineteenth century brought the first attempts to extend and to institutionalise it. The French had set an example by appointing several consultative bodies during their occupation of Egypt. In 1829 Muhammad 'Alt Pasha set up a council of consultation (*majlis mashwara*) of 156 members, all nominated. They consisted of 33 high officials of the central government, 24 provincial officials, and 99 notables. They met only once a year, for a day or longer if necessary, and discussed such topics as agriculture, education and taxes. When Muhammad 'Alt occupied Palestine and Syria, his governors appointed a consultative council of notables (*majlis shura*) in each of the main towns, with advisory and some judicial functions. In 1845 the Ottoman Sultan Abdülmejid also experimented with an assembly of pro-

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vincial representatives. Two were to be chosen from each province, "from among those who are respected and trusted, are people of intelligence and knowledge, who know the requisites of prosperity and the characteristics of the population." Despite these high qualifications the experiment produced no results and was abandoned. A similar and equally inconclusive experiment was held in Persia shortly after.

While Sultans and Pashas experimented with nominated advisory bodies, some of their subjects began to play with more radical ideas. In classical Islamic usage *hurriyya*, freedom, was purely a legal term, denoting the legal status of the free man, as opposed to that of the slave. The first references to political freedom in Muslim writings are hostile and suspicious; it is something foolish and evil, much the same as libertinism and anarchy. But soon a more positive attitude appears. In the eighteen twenties and 'thirties young Muslims began to come to Europe, in search of enlightenment and of the elusive secret of Western power. In the Europe of that time there was no lack of voices to commend the merits of liberalism, the cause of idealists and businessmen alike—and what, to the alien visitor, could have seemed more extraordinary, more distinctive of the West than constitutional and representative government? It is not surprising that many of them decided that this was the talisman they sought.

ONE OF THE FIRST Middle Easterners to argue the merits of parliamentary government was an Egyptian, the Azhari Sheikh Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Tahtāwī. In 1826, at the age of twenty-five, he accompanied the Egyptian student mission to Paris, and stayed there until 1831. He was not himself a member of the mission, but was their religious preceptor. He seems, however, to have learnt more than any of his wards. His book, containing an account of what he saw in France, was published in Arabic in 1834, and in a Turkish translation in 1839. It contains a description of parliamentary government, the purpose of which is to secure government under law, and to protect the subjects from tyranny—or rather, as he observes, to give the subjects the opportunity to protect themselves. Sheikh Rifā'a witnessed and explained the 1830 revolution in which, he says, the king was removed for violating the constitution and attempting to curtail the freedoms which it assured. He attached great importance to the Press, "the sheets called newspapers (*al-waraqāt ... al-musammāt bi'l-jurnālāt wa'l-gazetāt*)" as a safeguard against misrule and a medium for the communication of knowledge and ideas. The book includes a complete translation of the French constitution, with comments.

Sheikh Rifā'a was no liberal revolutionary, but a loyal servant of Muhammad 'Alī and his successors, whom he served with distinction for many years. His political teachings, after his return to Egypt, tended to be cautious and conservative; the sovereign must rule as well as reign, but should use his power wisely and justly, with proper respect for the law and for the rights of the subject—a position closer to the enlightened despots than to the Revolution. Such exhortations to the sovereign to govern with justice were in the classical tradition of Islamic political writings; what is new is the idea that the subject has a *right* to justice, and that some sort of apparatus might be set up to secure that right. The same kind of modified conservatism can be found in an essay written by Sadik Rifat Pasha, the Turkish ambassador in Vienna in 1837, perhaps under the influence of Metternich. He too speaks of the "rights of the people" and "the rights of freedom," by which he meant freedom from oppressive and arbitrary government.

But in fact government was becoming more and not less oppressive. The creation of a modern administrative apparatus on the one hand, and the introduction of modern methods of communication and coercion on the other, were tightening the screws of government; the old intermediate limiting powers of the religious, military and landowning interests were abrogated or enfeebled, leaving the state with nothing but its own edicts and charters to restrain it. Little understood by the people, half-heartedly applied by the officials, supported by no strong body of either interest or opinion, these charters of civil rights, however well-intentioned, could have but little effect.

AT THIS POINT a cleavage begins to appear between reformers and radicals—the Ottoman heirs of the Enlightenment and of the Revolution. The former, usually conservative and authoritarian in politics, seek to modernise in order to strengthen and enrich their countries, and use all the powers of the reinforced state for this purpose. The latter, including both reactionary and progressive elements, criticise the reforms and still more the manner of their application, and seek a remedy in constitutional-

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ism, in ideas which they derive from European liberalism but often attribute to Qur'ānic and other Islamic doctrines. These idealogical differences are complicated—sometimes even motivated—by personal and political quarrels, and notably by the rivalry between Ottoman Istanbul and Khedivial Cairo which, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was an important element in Middle Eastern political life.

In the 'sixties and 'seventies of the nineteenth century constitutionalism in the Middle East seemed to be taking important steps forward. In 1861 the Bey of Tunis, then an autonomous monarchy under a loose Ottoman suzerainty, proclaimed a constitution—the first in any Islamic country. The Bey remained head of the state and of the faith, and retained executive power for himself and his ministers, with whom, however, he was responsible to a Grand Council of 60 members, some appointed by the Bey and some co-opted, for a term of five years. The judicial power was to be exercised by an independent judiciary, the legislative power shared by the Council with the Government. The Tunisian constitution was suspended in 1864, but the trend continued elsewhere. The year 1866 brought important developments in other lands under Ottoman suzerainty, nearer home. In Roumania a liberal constitution was proclaimed, based on the Belgian constitution of 1831; in Egypt the Khedive Ismā'īl created a Consultative Assembly of Delegates (*majlis shurā al-nuwwāb*), consisting of 75 delegates elected for a three-year term by a system of indirect, collegiate elections. The Young Ottoman constitutionalists who in 1867 sought refuge in England and France received financial support from the Khedive's brother, Mustafa Fazil Pasha, and then from the Khedive Ismā'īl himself. After some setbacks their cause seemed to triumph, when in 1876 an Ottoman constitution was promulgated in Istanbul by the new Sultan, Abdül-hamid II. This too was influenced by the liberal monarchical Belgian constitution, both directly and through the Prussian constitutional enactment of 1850, in which Belgian liberal principles were adapted in a number of respects to the more authoritarian traditions of Prussia. It provided for a parliament, consisting of a nominated senate and an elected chamber, with some, rather perfunctory, recognition of the principle of the separation of powers.

The effective life of the constitution was brief. After a general election, the first Ottoman parliament assembled in March, 1877, and sat until June. New elections were then held, and a second parliament met in December. It soon began to show alarming vigour, and on February 14 was summarily dismissed by the Sultan. The first Ottoman parliament had sat for two sessions, of about five months in all; it did not meet again for thirty years.

These early constitutional reforms were not only gestures of emulation towards Europe; they also had a quality of propitiation. They were intended to prove that their authors were also civilised and progressive by European standards, and therefore worthy of respect—to qualify for loans and other forms of favourable consideration, and, in extreme cases, to ward off interference and occupation. In these purposes they secured only fitful and limited success. Neither the shortlived Tunisian constitution nor the slightly longer Egyptian parliamentary experiment did anything to halt the downward plunge to bankruptcy, disorder and occupation. Some observers thought they might even have helped it. In Turkey Sultan Abdülhamid, the last of the great authoritarian reformers of the nineteenth century, decided to dispense with the trappings of democracy, and to achieve modernisation by more traditional methods.

For the next thirty years the only place in the Middle East where parliamentary institutions of any kind existed was Egypt.

The assembly of 1866 held its prescribed three terms, and was succeeded by further, similar assemblies, elected in 1869, 1876, and 1881. In 1882, during the Urabi revolt, the assembly prepared and promulgated a draft parliamentary constitution. The draft was abrogated and the assembly dismissed when Urabi failed. A new start was made after the British occupation of 1882, when Lord Dufferin, who was sent to Egypt to reorganise the government of the country, wrote to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, in London that the British occupation should be based on "national independence and constitutional government." The first objective, because of changing circumstances, received less attention than it required, though more than is sometimes allowed. The second was a matter of continuing concern to the British authorities, in both London and Cairo, who made a serious attempt to place the govern-

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ment of the country on a constitutional basis and allowed the Press a measure of freedom which, though limited, was sufficient to attract creative and critical writers from neighbouring territories enjoying full independence but no freedom. The new Organic Law for Egypt, promulgated in May 1883, provided for two quasi-parliamentary bodies; the first was a legislative council of 30 members, 14 nominated and permanent, 16 indirectly elected for six years; the second, the General Assembly, consisted of the Khedive's ministers, the members of the legislative council, and 46 others elected for six years. These bodies, with their restricted and apathetic electorates, their limited and advisory powers, their brief and infrequent meetings, must have seemed a poor substitute for the constitutional aspirations of the liberals. They functioned, however, regularly and not altogether ineffectively, from 1883 to 1912, and were able on more than one occasion to take an independent line, asserting their views and rights against the Khedive and sometimes against the occupying power. Their growing authority was recognised in 1913, when they were merged together in a new and rather more powerful body, called the Legislative Assembly. This consisted of the ministers, 17 nominated and 66 elected members, indirectly elected for a term of six years, one third every two years. This rule of rotation was perhaps due to American influence. The first-degree elections were in October, 1913; the first session lasted from January to June, 1914. There were no more elections or assemblies until after the war.

Meanwhile far more radical developments had been taking place further north.

In 1905 a thrill of exultation passed through Asia when for the first time an Asian power, Japan, was able to defeat a European great power, Russia, in battle on both land and sea. There were some who made the further observation that the oriental victor was the only Asian country that had adopted a form of parliamentary and constitutional government, while the European loser was the only European power that had refused to do so. In Russia, the Tsar himself, faced with revolution, seemed to concede the point, by granting a form of constitution and convening the first Duma. In Egypt the nationalist leader Mustafā Kāmil wrote a book called *The Rising Sun*, showing by the example of Japan how an oriental nation could achieve self-renewal and success; in Turkey two officers wrote a five-volume illustrated history of the Russo-Japanese war; in Persia, in the summer of 1906, a constitutional revolution forced the Shah to convene a national assembly which drafted a liberal constitution. Two years later the Young Turk revolutionary officers, fearing—mistakenly as it turned out—that the meeting of the English and Russian sovereigns at Reval portended the demise of the Sick Man of Europe, decided on an immediate dose of the constitutional elixir, and forced the reluctant Sultan to restore the constitution of 1876, thus inaugurating the second, somewhat longer, and far stormier interlude of constitutional government in Turkey.

The victory of the allied and associated powers over their somewhat less democratic opponents in 1918, with the collapse of the only autocracy in the allied camp, seemed to provide final proof of the proposition that democracy makes a state healthy, wealthy and strong. In Damascus, Prince Faysal's Syrian Congress drafted a constitution for a limited, parliamentary monarchy. It was abandoned with the arrival of the French on July 19, 1920. The British and French, as mandatory powers, created constitutional republics and monarchies in their own image, in the countries under their control; elsewhere too, in the years following the victory, constitutions and parliaments spread all over the Middle East in what seemed a universal triumph of liberal and democratic principles.

To-day this great experiment must be written off as an almost complete failure. The oldest surviving constitutional régime in the Middle East at the present time is that of Persia, where the constitution promulgated after the liberal revolution of 1906 remains in force, though barely in effect. The second oldest is that of Lebanon, where the 1926 constitution, despite some vicissitudes and fairly drastic emendations, has been retained. Elsewhere, all the constitutions adopted in the democratic millennium of the nineteen twenties have been abandoned or replaced, by more or less violent processes. In Turkey, the will and the desire remain. The military junta which destroyed the old régime in 1960 itself withdrew, with unique self-effacement, to allow the emergence of a new constitutional democracy. The government of the second Turkish republic is so determined to prove that democracy can work in Turkey that it is a criminal offence punishable by a term of imprisonment to say that it cannot. In Egypt,

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which has the longest and, on the whole, the most successful record of parliamentary government in the Arab world, the abandonment of the Western form of representative, liberal democracy was most final and most complete. Elsewhere the captains and the kings divide the Arab lands, and neither show any inclination to depart.

THERE ARE ONLY three countries in the Middle East to-day where political democracy functions at all—in Israel, Lebanon and Turkey. They are also the three most European states in the area—the first non-Islamic, the second only half-Islamic, the third wholly Islamic, but transformed by two secularist revolutions. This has led some observers to conclude that Islam and democracy are incompatible—that is to say, that there is something in the Islamic pattern of social and political behaviour that impedes or prevents the proper working of parliamentary institutions. In support of this thesis, they point to the mishaps and breakdowns of parliamentary government in the Islamic states, old and new, where it has been tried—including even Pakistan, where its collapse is in striking contrast with the vigorous democracy of India, another successor state of the same imperial régime.

"Semites," says T. E. Lawrence, "have no half-tones in their register of vision... they exclude compromise, and pursue the logic of their ideas to its absurd ends...."

That there is something in this, no observer of Middle Eastern affairs can deny. But those who go on to argue that Arabs and other Muslims are necessarily incapable of democratic government are surely guilty of the same kind of absurdity. Some features of traditional Islamic civilisation are distinctly favourable to democratic development—such as tolerance, social mobility, and respect for law. Classical Islam succeeded, as Christendom never really succeeded, in combining religious tolerance with deep religious faith, extending it not only to unbelievers but also—a far more exacting test—to heretics. The coexistence of differing schools of holy law, all regarded as orthodox, is another example of Islamic tolerance and compromise. Socially, Islam has always been democratic, or rather equalitarian, rejecting both the caste system of India and the aristocratic privilege of Europe. It needed no revolution to introduce the "career open to the talents" to the Islamic world; it was there from the start, and, despite the inevitable tendency to the formation of aristocracies, it was never really eliminated. Islamic theory has always insisted on the supremacy of the law, and the subordination to it of the sovereign. In the Ottoman Empire the hierarchy of the *ulema* achieved considerable success in enforcing this principle. There remains of course the political difficulty—the total absence, despite the elective doctrine of the jurists, of any conception or experience of representative or limited government of any kind. It is this no doubt that underlies the theory that democracy cannot work in Islamic lands. That there is a predisposition to autocratic government among Muslim peoples is clear enough; that there is an inherent incapacity for any other has yet to be proved.

THERE IS ALWAYS something disquieting about a hypothesis that presumes a kind of political original sin in human societies; this one is in any case unnecessary, for there is enough in the recent history of the Middle East to explain the failure of constitutional democracy, without recourse to political theology. It is easy and tempting for us in the West to adopt an attitude of superiority, contemptuous or tolerant, and to ascribe the breakdown of our distinctive institutions, among other peoples, to the lack on their part of some of our distinctive virtues. It is easy, but it is not wise, and certainly not helpful. We of the West no doubt all share the belief that liberal democracy, with all its weaknesses, is the best instrument that any section of the human race has yet devised for the conduct of its political affairs. At the same time we should remain aware of its local origin and character, and try to avoid the primitive arrogance of making our own way of life the universal standard of political morality. "He is a barbarian," says Cæsar of Britannus in Shaw's play, "and thinks that the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature." Political democracy is a good custom. It has already spread far from its native land, and in time will surely spread much farther. It is not, however, a law of nature, and in some areas has been tried, found wanting, and abandoned. We must ask why.

IN THE MIDDLE EAST a serious attempt was made to introduce and to operate liberal democracy, with written constitutions, elected, sovereign parliaments, judicial safeguards, a

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multitude of parties, and a free Press. With few and atypical exceptions, these experiments have failed; in some countries democratic institutions are in a state of disrepair or collapse; in others they have already been abandoned, and the search begun for other paths to the pursuit of happiness.

To-day, with the hindsight of history to guide us, we can see many of the causes clearly enough. A political system taken over ready-made not merely from another country but from another civilisation, imposed by Western or westernised rulers from above and from without, could not respond adequately to the strains and stresses of Islamic, Middle Eastern society. Democracy was installed by autocratic decree; parliament sat in the capital, operated and supported by a minute minority, whose happy immersion in the new game of parties, programmes, and politicians was ignored, or else watched with baffled incomprehension by the great mass of the people. The result was a political order unrelated to the past or present of the country, and profoundly irrelevant to the needs of its future. The parliament at Westminster is the result of centuries of history, with its roots in the Anglo-Saxon *witenagemot*; it is the apex of a pyramid of self-governing institutions, with its base at the parish pump. It was evolved by Englishmen, on the basis of English experience, to meet English needs. The parliament of Cairo was imported in a box, assembled and ready for use, without even a set of do-it-yourself instructions. It responded to no need or demand of the Egyptian people; it enjoyed the backing of no powerful interest or body of opinion.

When a piece of expensive imported machinery falls apart in our hands, we are apt to lay the blame, not on our own inexpert handling, but on the manufacturers and suppliers. The West, which acted in both capacities, has had perhaps more than its fair share of blame for the breakdown of democracy. It cannot, however, wholly disclaim responsibility.

One fault was the failure adequately to support those who were its most enthusiastic disciples. Another lies in the mandatory system, which was supposed to provide a training in responsibility, but instead gave an advanced training in irresponsibility. The position was, if anything, rather worse in those countries that remained nominally independent, but subject to constant interference. There is a case to be made for as well as against the imperial peace—Persian, Roman, Arab, Turkish, French, or British—as a stage in the development and spread of civilisations; there is little that can be said in defence of the so-called imperialism encountered by the Middle East in the first half of the 20th century—an imperialism of interference without responsibility, which would neither create nor permit stable and orderly government. Perhaps one of the most significant distinctions in the ex-imperial countries of Asia and Africa is between those that were directly administered through a colonial or imperial civil service, and those that were under some form of indirect rule or influence. The people of the latter group of countries got the worst of both worlds, receiving neither the training in administration of the colonial territories, nor the practice in responsibility of the old independent states.

The system of direct rule, apart from the useful legacy of an efficient modern bureaucracy, has in addition the great merit of clarity. In British India, for example, the transfer of power and responsibility was clear, precise, and unequivocal. Until August 15th, 1947, the British were responsible; thereafter the British ceased to be and the Indians became responsible, and no serious observer has claimed or suspected otherwise. In Egypt, it would be difficult to agree on the date of the effective transfer of responsibility within half a century. This situation, with its parallels in other Middle Eastern countries, produced a generation of politicians more apt to demand responsibility than to accept it, with a tendency to take refuge from reality that has not entirely died out.

Even to-day, there are still politicians who reiterate the by now pointless demand that we treat them as responsible adults and equals—but show by their words and deeds that they count on us not to do so. There are too many who are willing to profit from that most insidious form of Western prejudice which shows itself by expecting and accepting a lower standard of behaviour and performance.

There is, of course, more to the question of democratic viability than cultural traditions and political aptitudes. Israel and Lebanon, two of the exceptions to the record of failure, are not only culturally westernised; they are also relatively well-fed, well-clothed, and well-housed. A small and highly urbanised population in a small area, with good communications and a high standard of education and of living, gives

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democracy a rather better chance than the sprawling, impoverished peasant slums that make up a good deal of the rest of the Middle East. After Israel and Lebanon, Turkey has the highest *per capita* income, the greatest mileage of railway in relation to area, the highest rate of literacy in the Middle East—though, as against this, Egypt has more industry, more town-dwellers, and has, or until recently had, more newspaper readers. There would seem to be some correlation between democracy and material progress, though which is the chicken and which is the egg is another question.

THIS MUCH CAN BE SAID with reasonable certainty—that many of the social and economic factors that helped to make democracy work in other parts of the world are missing in the Middle East, or at least were missing in the crucial period when the experiment was tried. Society was still composed mainly of landlords and peasants. The commercial and industrial middle class, such as it was, consisted largely of foreigners and of members of minorities, who as such were unable to play the classical political and cultural role of the bourgeoisie in Western societies; the new, Muslim professional class of lawyers, journalists, and teachers lacked the economic power and cohesive force to play any really independent role. The industrial working class barely existed; the peasant masses and urban *lumpenproletariat* were poor, ignorant, and unorganised, still totally unfitted for participation in political life. In such a society no new and greater loyalty could arise to transcend the old and intense loyalties to tribe, clan, and family, to sect and guild; no tradition of local co-operation and initiative could develop, to break the ancient habits of dependence and acquiescence. The liberals tried and failed, and the parliamentary system passed into the hands of those who controlled wealth and could command or buy obedience. They used it chiefly as an instrument to maintain their own power, and to prevent any change or reform which they considered a threat to their interests.

In a long period of tranquillity, the peoples of the Middle East might perhaps have managed to adjust their imported political structures to their own conditions and needs. No such period was allowed to them. Instead, their young and untried democracies were subjected to a series of violent political shocks and stresses, of both internal and external origin, and confronted with the familiar Afro-Asian economic problem of the demographic explosion. In most countries, the parliamentary system collapsed under the strain; all too often, the disappointment and frustration of leaders gave way to a cynicism and opportunism that outraged the moral and religious sense of those whom they professed to lead, and brought the whole institution of liberal democracy into disrepute. For the average Egyptian, representative government means, not Westminster or Washington, but Faruk and the pashas; who can blame him if he rejects and despises it?

FOR A WHILE the ideal of democracy was replaced by another—that of republicanism. There was a time when republic and democracy were thought to be two different ways of saying the same thing; modern Greek indeed makes the word *demokratia* do service for both. To-day, of course, we know better; in an age of democratic monarchies and authoritarian republics we are unlikely to confuse the two. Republic and democracy, far from being synonymous, seem barely compatible in many parts of the world.

In the Middle East republicanism has not always been associated with libertarian ideas. The first Muslim republics were established in the Turkic territories of the Russian Empire, where the temporary relaxation of pressure from the centre after the revolution of 1917 allowed an interval of local experimentation. In some areas, notably in Azerbaijan, this took the form of bourgeois nationalist republics, all of which were in due course conquered by the Red Army and incorporated in the U.S.S.R. The Kemalist republic in Turkey and the French-style republics in Syria and Lebanon set new patterns, but it was not until after the second World War that a new wave of republicanism was launched with the proclamation of the Egyptian Republic, by the military régime, in June, 1953. This was followed by a number of others, not all of the same kind: Pakistan in November, 1953—an Islamic Republic; the Sudan in January, 1956; Iraq, by revolution, in July, 1958; Tunisia in May, 1959; the Yemen in September, 1962. To-day all but a handful of the states of the Middle East are called republics, though the common designation covers a wide variety of political realities. A republic, in Middle Eastern usage, is a state with a non-dynastic head. The term has no reference to the processes by which the head attains his office, nor to the

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manner in which he discharges it. Republicanism meant the end of monarchy, and of much —though not all—that was connected with it. It had nothing to do with representative government or liberal democracy.

WHILE DEMOCRACY FALTERED and died in the Arab lands, the quest for freedom entered upon new paths. Political freedom was never much of an issue during the period of Anglo-French domination; though limited in various ways, it was more extensive and better protected than at any time before or since. What was far more important was the demand for corporate or collective freedom, more technically known as independence.

The Anglo-French régimes, by the logic of their own systems rather than in response to popular demand, conceded a large measure of freedom, but withheld independence. It was natural, therefore, that the national political struggle should have concentrated on the latter and rather neglected the former. The ending of imperial rule was the focus and purpose of all political effort—never more so than in the period just after it was ended. With the coming of independence it was found that freedom—in the old, classical liberal sense—had been lost. There were few to resist or lament its passing.

The ending of foreign rule, when it came, did not solve but merely revealed the fundamental economic, social, and political problems of the Arab lands. Imperialism, though repeatedly vanquished, remained the chief enemy, but with it another was associated—feudalism, sometimes also called capitalism. Both terms designate the existing economic order. A period of experiment and upheaval followed, of policies described by their friends as pragmatic, by their enemies as opportunist. And then, in the summer of 1961, the government of the United Arab Republic revealed the name of the new ideology that was to be their guiding light. It was called Arab socialism, and its purpose was to secure economic liberty, the only kind that mattered.

> "To-day," said President Nasir, announcing a series of nationalisations, "we are experiencing real economic liberty. No one exercises arbitrary power over the economy of the country or over its inhabitants. Every citizen feels that he is free in his country on the economic level and that he is not subjected to the dictatorship of capital. . . . True liberty is true democracy. It is economic liberty and social equality."

A few days earlier the President had given his definition of democracy:

> "Fundamentally, democracy means the establishment of social justice and equity for the oppressed class as against the oppressive class. Fundamentally, democracy means that government should not be the monopoly of feudalism and exploiting capital, but should be for the welfare of the whole nation. . . . Democracy is not created simply by issuing a constitution or setting up a parliament. Democracy is not defined by the constitution or the parliament, but is created by eliminating feudalism and monopoly and the domination of capital. There is no freedom and no democracy without equality, and no equality with feudalism and exploitation and domination by capital."

Like freedom, like democracy, socialism is a word of many meanings. The Soviet Union, we are told, is dedicated to the building of socialism; so too are the British and Scandinavian Labour Parties. One of the most famous of parties bearing the name socialist was the National Socialist German Workers' Party, usually known by its German abbreviated name as the Nazis. In the demonology of the American right—so we have been told—socialism means anything to the left of Louis XIV. According to the rector of Al-Azhar, in a statement published on December 22nd, 1961, the most perfect, complete, useful, and profound socialism is that prescribed by Islam, and resting in the foundations of the faith.

To which of these, if any, is Arab socialism related?

SOCIALISM began in the Middle East with small coteries, as a rather more recondite version of the prevailing fashion of copying Europe.

A few serious writers gave it their support, such as the Syrian Christian Shibli Shumayyil (1860–1917) and the Egyptian Christian Salama Musa (ca. 1887–1959). Both followed Western models of socialism, Shumayyil the French school of Jaurès, Musa the English Fabians. Also French in inspiration was the short-lived and ineffectual Ottoman Socialist Party, founded in 1910, with a branch in Paris and a newspaper called *Besheriyet*—humanity. The Russian Revolution brought a brief spurt of left-wing socialist activities in several countries, but this too petered out in sectarian squabbling, leaving only a very small, very hard core of professional revolutionaries. In Mandatory Palestine, a strong social-democratic labour movement, of

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European type, developed among the Jewish population; elsewhere in the Middle East, in the 'twenties and 'thirties, socialism had virtually no following—nothing, for example, that could be compared with the social and political radicalism of the nationalist movements in India and South-east Asia.

A new phase began with the electoral victory of the British Labour Party in 1945. Britain, so it seemed at the time, was on top of the world, and socialism was on top in Britain. Socialism must therefore be a good thing. In addition, it seemed to provide an answer for the mounting economic problems of the area. A series of socialist parties appeared in various countries, the most important of which was Akram Haurani's Arab Socialist Party, founded in Syria in 1950. In 1953 it was amalgamated with Michel 'Aflaq's Arab Renaissance Party, to form the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party, usually known as the *Ba'th*. This party, with a programme combining economic socialism and a kind of mystical nationalism, soon won a considerable following in the Arab East. Apart from the Communists, it was the only party with a systematic ideology, with an extensive network of branches, and with a following among both the intellectuals and the working classes. In 1956 the *Ba'th* leaders joined the government in Syria, and played a decisive role in taking that country into the United Arab Republic. For a while the *Ba'th* played a predominant role in Syria after the Union, and claimed even to be providing ideological leadership for the U.A.R. itself. But the end of 1959, however, they were losing ground. In Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon, they were opposed and, on occasion, suppressed; even in the U.A.R. their leaders were dismissed from the high federal offices which they had held, and the party itself was suppressed twenty-two months after the Union. The *Ba'th* did not return to prominence until the spring of 1963, when the revolutions in Iraq and Syria brought it to power in both countries, and inaugurated a new sequence of collaboration and of conflict with President Nasir. In the meantime the only place where Socialist ideology could be seriously discussed was liberal, capitalist Beirut.

Socialism was in the air in the 1950s, as liberalism had been a century earlier. Like its predecessors, socialism won a certain following among intellectuals, but it was not they who brought it to power. The socialist revolution, like the liberal constitutions, was imposed from above—not in response to a popular demand, not by the victory of a socialist or working-class movement, but by the decision of a military régime that had already been in power for nine years.

Some practical steps, of a non-doctrinal nature, had been taken earlier. British, French, and some Jewish enterprises had been nationalised following the Sinai and Suez expeditions; Belgian assets were added during the Congo crisis. The resulting flight of foreign and minority capital narrowed the field of candidates for what one might call conservative nationalisations; the government, apparently despairing of private enterprise, decided to adopt a more active role in economic life. Statements of the time refer to social justice rather than to socialism, and appear to envisage a kind of limited state capitalism, with a welfare programme. By 1960 socialism was becoming more explicit in both word and deed, particularly with the nationalisation of the great Misr group of enterprises. The nationalisation of the newspaper press in the same year was not a purely, or even primarily, economic measure.

The next stage came with the series of decrees of July, 1961, establishing state ownership or control over almost all large-scale economic enterprises, taking over, with compensation, all landholdings above 100 feddans (about 100 acres), imposing drastic income-tax in the higher brackets, and forbidding any individual to own more than £E10,000 worth of shares in a list of named companies. At the same time a series of speeches and articles explained the nature and purpose of these measures, and of the Arab socialism which they exemplified. The need of the country, said Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, in an authoritative ideological article, was for a comprehensive plan, harnessing the entire energy of the nation, which would ensure the necessary increase in production, while at the same time providing for the immediate consumer needs of the long-deprived masses. In this way, economic growth and social welfare would both be achieved without either the domestic and colonial exploitation of Western capitalism, or the ruthless sacrifice of the present to future generations, as practised by Stalin and Mao Tse-tung. A French politician once said that war is too serious a matter to be left to the generals. The Egyptian officers had already decided that politics were too important to be left to politicians; they now also

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reached the conclusion that business was too important a matter to be left to business men.

"ARCHAEOLOGY," said Mr. Bernard Berenson, "like all studies pursued with a scientific method, is based on comparison. It is constantly comparing unknown with known, uncertain with certain, unclassified with classified." It is no doubt in pursuit of the archæological method, which has served so well in the study of earlier periods of Middle Eastern history, that many attempts have been made to explain and to classify recent Middle Eastern developments by comparing them with earlier, already classified events, which took place at other times or in other places.

Nasirism in its successive phases, the latest of which is Arab socialism, has been subjected to several such explanations by comparison. Some have sought precedents in the Egyptian past—for there is also an indigenous tradition of state economic action, exemplified in the commercial monopolies of the Mamluk sultans in the fifteenth century, and the land nationalisation of Muhammad 'Alt Pasha at the beginning of the nineteenth. Others have looked for Western parallels, and, pronouncing a kind of guilt by association, have at different times described the military régime as Nazi and as Communist. To call a movement Nazi, in both the West and the Soviet Union, in most of Asia and Africa, is usually considered an insult. It is not so in the eastern Arab lands, where many leaders make no secret of their war-time sympathy and even association with the Axis. When Kasim called Nasir a "Hitlerite," the name was a danger-sign of Communist penetration in Baghdad; this was not part of the Arab vocabulary of abuse, and its appearance as such was evidence of alien influence. In Egypt there were many reports, a few years ago, of the employment of Nazi German experts, particularly in police and propaganda work. The pervasive efficiency of the one, and the strident mendacity of the other, may well have owed something to the example or instruction of Nazi specialists. President Nasir himself on one occasion cited and recommended the so-called "Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

Nevertheless, one should not attach too much importance to this. Others, on both sides of the iron curtain, have not scrupled to make use of Nazi experts, in different fields, when it suited them to do so. Evil communications corrupt good manners. These Nazi associations would seem to indicate a degree of moral obtuseness in the Egyptian régime of a kind that is fairly widespread in the modern world, but not necessarily any greater resemblance to the Nazi dictatorship than is implied in that.

Charges of Communism also rest on rather slender foundations. The Communists, like the Nazis, could count on a sympathetic welcome, for they appeared in the same guise—as enemies of the West. But Communism, unlike Nazism, is a fact, not a memory—and this meant both opportunity and danger. At one time Communist influence in the Arab world seemed very great; of late it has diminished, as the attractions of Communism are offset by the activities of the Soviet Government. In any case, the dangers of either ideology have been greatly exaggerated. No doubt, there are some who would like to follow Hitler's path of military aggrandisement, others who would like to take Stalin's road of ruthless industrialisation. But in a region which has neither the military potential of Hitler's Germany nor the human and natural resources of Stalin's Russia, neither is possible.

MORE RECENTLY, comparisons have been made between Arab socialism and that of the Labour and Social-democratic parties of Western Europe. Though there is little enough resemblance to the parliamentary socialist parties of affluent Europe at the present day, some affinity may perhaps be traced with the non-Communist left-wing socialism of the hungry 'thirties, of the kind which flourished at the left extremity of the British Labour Party and which, by-passing the fascist-influenced Middle East of that time, exercised so powerful an attraction on the nationalist movements of south and south-east Asia. In this sense, Arab socialism in its current phase probably owes more to Harold Laski and the early Nehru than to Stalin or Hitler. But much has changed in the transition to the 1960s —and to the Middle East. The movement has lost its ethical urge and liberal humanism, but retained its angry impatience with parliamentary delays; it has lost its optimistic internationalism, and acquired a new content, deriving from sources and impulses profoundly alien to both the liberal and socialist political traditions of the West.

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It is no doubt tempting to try and explain Middle Eastern phenomena in terms of European, or North or South American experience; it may also, within limits, be very useful. But on the whole such comparisons—perhaps analogies would be a better word—obscure more than they explain. No doubt, Middle Eastern societies and politics are subject to the same human vicissitudes and therefore to the same rules of interpretation as those of the West. But since the Middle East has for some time now been under the influence of the West, and has adopted Western outward forms in the organisation and expression of its political and social life, it is fatally easy for the Western observer to take these alien outward forms as the element of comparison, and to disregard or misrepresent the deeper realities which they so imperfectly express. The Islamic society of the Middle East, with its own complex web of experience and tradition, cannot adequately be labelled and classified with a few names and terms borrowed from the Western past.

THE FIGHT for political freedom has been fought and lost—though as an old-fashioned liberal I find it hard to believe that such a defeat can ever be final. The fight for national freedom has been fought and won—though the triumph of nationalism over imperialism has become a new kind of Middle Eastern myth, in need of seasonal and ritual re-enactment. The fight for economic freedom—meaning freedom from want—is engaged.

What the result will be, no one can say. It may be that the Middle Eastern socialists, like the Middle Eastern democrats before them, will find their new machine falling to pieces in their hands, and cast it aside in frustration and disappointment; it may be that, learning from the errors of their predecessors, they will adapt it, master it, and make it work. This much is already clear—that whatever its nature and outcome may finally prove to be, economic and political radicalism is a powerful force in Arab affairs, and has given a new drive and direction to Arab nationalism.

A Rat

Having thrown away
The life of life-and-death,
A rat lay mounded in the middle of the road,
Like a bas-relief;
Before long the rat became flat.
All kinds of wheels
Came gliding along
And like an iron flattened the rat.
The rat became thinner and thinner—
As he became thinner and thinner
The rat
Ceased to be the "*rat*" of "a rat"
Or the "*a*" rat,
And even the shadow of death vanished.
One day when I came out into the road and looked,
A sheet of something flat was lying there,
Beaten and warped by the sun.

Baku Yamanoguchi

(translated from the Japanese by Shozo Tokunaga)

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V. S. Naipaul

A Christmas Story

THOUGH IT IS Christmas Eve my mind is not on Christmas. I look forward instead to the day after Boxing Day, for on that day the inspectors from the Audit Department in Port of Spain will be coming down to the village where the new school has been built. I await their coming with calm. There is still time, of course, to do all that is necessary. But I shall not do it, though my family, from whom the spirit of Christmas has, alas, also fled, have been begging me to lay aside my scruples, my new-found faith, and to rescue us all from disgrace and ruin. It is in my power to do so, but there comes a time in every man's life when he has to take a stand. This time, I must confess, has come very late for me.

It seems that everything has come late to me. I continued a Hindu, though of that religion I saw and knew little save meaningless and shameful rites, until I was nearly eighteen. Why I so continued I cannot explain. Perhaps it was the inertia with which that religion deadens its devotees. It did not, after all, require much intelligence to see that Hinduism, with its animistic rites, its idolatry, its emphasis on mango leaf, banana leaf and—the truth is the truth—cowdung, was a religion little fitted for the modern world. I had only to contrast the position of the Hindus with that of the Christians. I had only to consider the differing standards of dress, houses, food. Such differences have to-day more or less disappeared, and the younger generation will scarcely understand what I mean. I might even be reproached with laying too great a stress on the superficial. What can I say? Will I be believed if I say that to me the superficial has always symbolised the profound? But it is enough, I feel, to state that at eighteen my eyes were opened. I did not have to be "converted" by the Presbyterians of the Canadian Mission. I had only to look at the work they were doing among the backward Hindus and Moslems of my district. I had only to look at their schools, to look at the houses of the converted.

My Presbyterianism, then, though late in coming, affected me deeply. I was interested in teaching—there was no other thing a man of my limited means and limited education could do—and my Presbyterianism was a distinct advantage. It gave me a grace in the eyes of my superiors. It also enabled me to be a good teacher, for between what I taught and what I felt there was no discordance. How different the position of those who, still unconverted, attempted to teach in Presbyterian schools!

And now that the time for frankness has come, I must also remark on the pleasure my new religion gave me. It was a pleasure to hear myself called Randolph, a name of rich historical asociations, a name, I feel, thoroughly attuned to the times in which we live and to the society in which I found myself, and to forget that once—I still remember it with shame—I answered, with simple instinct, to the name of—Choonilal. That, however, is so much in the past. I have buried it. Yet I remember it now, not only because the time for frankness has come, but because only two weeks ago my son

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Winston, going through some family papers —clearly the boy had no right to be going through my private papers, but he shares his mother's curiosity—came upon the name. He teased, indeed reproached, me with it, and in a fit of anger, for which I am now grievously sorry and for which I must make time, while time there still is, to apologise to him, in a fit of anger I gave him a sound thrashing, such as I often gave in my school-teaching days to those pupils whose persistent shortcomings were matched by the stupidity and backwardness of their parents. Backwardness has always roused me to anger.

AS MUCH AS BY THE NAME Randolph, pleasure was given me by the stately and *clean*—there is no other word for it—rituals sanctioned by my new religion. How agreeable, for instance, to rise early on a Sunday morning, to bathe and breakfast and then, in the most spotless of garments, to walk along the still quiet and cool roads to our place of worship, and there to see the most respectable and respected, all dressed with a similar purity, addressing themselves to the devotions in which I myself could participate, after for long being an outsider, someone to whom the words *Christ* and *Father* meant no more than *winter* or *autumn* or *daffodil*. Such of the unconverted village folk who were energetic enough to be awake and alert at that hour gaped at us as we walked in white procession to our church. And though their admiration was sweet, I must confess that at the same time it filled me with shame to reflect that not long before I too formed part of the gaping crowd. To walk past their gaze was peculiarly painful to me, for I, more perhaps than anyone in that slow and stately procession, *knew*—and by my silence had for nearly eighteen years condoned—the practices those people indulged in in the name of religion. My attitude towards them was therefore somewhat stern, and it gave me some little consolation to know that though we were in some ways alike, we were distinguished from them not only by our names, which after all no man carries pinned to his lapel, but also by our dress. On these Sundays of which I speak the men wore trousers and jackets of white drill, quite unlike the leg-revealing dhoti which it still pleased those others to wear, a garment which I have always felt makes the wearer ridiculous. I even sported a white solar topee. The girls and ladies wore the short frocks which the others held in abhorrence; they wore hats; in every respect, I am pleased to say, they resembled their sisters who had come all the way from Canada and other countries to work among our people. I might be accused of laying too much stress on superficial things. But I ought to say in my own defence that it is my deeply held conviction that progress is not a matter of outward show, but an attitude of mind; and it was this that my religion gave me.

IT MIGHT SEEM from what I have so far said that the embracing of Presbyterianism conferred only benefits and pleasure. I wish to make no great fuss of the trials I had to endure, but it is sufficient to state that, while at school and in other associations my fervent adherence to my new faith was viewed with favour, I had elsewhere to put up with the constant ridicule of those of my relations who continued, in spite of my example, in the ways of darkness. They spoke my name, Randolph, with accents of the purest mockery. I bore this with fortitude. It was what I expected, and I was greatly strengthened by my faith, as a miser is by the thought of his gold. In time, when they saw that their ridiculing of my name had not the slightest effect on me—on the contrary, whereas before I had in my signature suppressed my first name behind the blank initial C, now I spelt out Randolph in full —in time they desisted.

But that was not the end of my trials. I had up to that time eaten with my fingers, a manner of eating which is now so repulsive to me, so ugly, so unhygienic, that I wonder how I managed to do it until my eighteenth year. Yet I must now confess that at that time food never tasted as sweet as when eaten with the fingers, and that my first attempts to eat with the proper implements of

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knife and fork and spoon were almost in the nature of shameful experiments, furtively carried out; and even when I was by myself I could not get rid of the feeling of self-consciousness. It was easier to get used to the name of Randolph than to knife and fork.

Eating, then, in my determined manner one Sunday lunchtime, I heard that I had a visitor. It was a man; he didn't knock, but came straight into my room, and I knew at once that he was a relation. These people have never learned to knock or to close doors behind them.

I must confess I felt somewhat foolish, to be caught with those implements in my hand.

"Hello, Randolph," the boy, Hori, said, pronouncing the name in a most offensive manner.

"Good afternoon, *Hori*."

He remained impervious to my irony. This boy, Hori, was the greatest of my tormentors. He was also the grossest. He strained charity. He was a great lump of a man and he gloried in his brutishness. He fancied himself a debater as well, and many were the discussions and arguments we had had, this lout—he strained charity, as I have said—insisting that to squat on the ground and eat off banana leaves was hygienic and proper, that knives and forks were dirty because used again and again by various persons, whereas the fingers were personal and could always be made thoroughly clean by washing. But he never had *his* fingers clean, that I knew.

"Eating, Randolph?"

"I am having my lunch, *Hori*."

"Beef, Randolph. You are progressing, Randolph."

"I am glad you note it, *Hori*."

I cannot understand why these people should persist in this admiration for the cow, which has always seemed to me a filthy animal, far filthier than the pig, which they abhor. Yet it must be stated that this eating of beef was the most strenuous of my tests. If I persevered it was only because I was strengthened by my faith. But to be found at this juncture—I was in my Sunday suit of white drill, my prayer book was on the table, my white solar topee on the wall, and I was eating beef with knife and fork—to be found thus by Hori was a trifle embarrassing. I must have looked the picture of the over-zealous convert.

My instinct was to ask him to leave. But it occurred to me that that would have been too easy, too cowardly a way out. Instead, I plied my knife and fork with as much skill as I could command at that time. He sat, not on a chair, but on the table, just next to my plate, the lout, and gazed at me while I ate. Ignoring his smile, I ate, as one might eat of sacrificial food. He crossed his fat legs, leaned back on his palms and examined me. I paid no attention. Then he took one of the forks that were about and began picking his teeth with it. I was angry and revolted. Tears sprang to my eyes. I rose, pushed away my plate, pushed back my chair, and asked him to leave. The violence of my reaction surprised him, and he did as I asked. As soon as he had gone I took the fork he had handled and bent it and stamped on it and then threw it out of the window.

PROGRESS, as I have said, is an attitude of mind. And if I relate this trifling incident with such feeling, it is because it demonstrates how difficult that attitude of mind is to acquire, for there are hundreds who are ready to despise and ridicule those who they think are getting above themselves. And let people say what they will, the contempt even of the foolish is hard to bear. Let no one think, therefore, that my new religion did not bring its share of trials and tribulations. But I was sufficiently strengthened by my faith to bear them all with fortitude.

My life thereafter was a lonely one. I had cut myself off from my family, and from those large family gatherings which had hitherto given me so much pleasure and comfort, for always, I must own, at the back of my mind there had been the thought that in the event of real trouble there would be people to whom I could turn. Now I was deprived of this solace. I stuck to my vocation with a dedication which surprised even my-

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self. To be a teacher it is necessary to be taught; and after much difficulty I managed to have myself sent to the Training College in Port of Spain. The competition for these places was fierce, and for many years I was passed over, because there were many others who were more fitting. Some indeed had been born of Presbyterian parents. But my zeal, which ever mounted as the failures multiplied, eventually was rewarded. I was twenty-eight when I was sent to the Training College, considerably older than most of the trainees.

It was no pleasure to me to note that during those ten years the boy Hori had been prospering. He had gone into the trucking business and he had done remarkably well. He had bought a second truck, then a third, and it seemed that to his success there could be no limit, while my own was always restricted to the predictable contents of the brown-paper pay-packet at the end of the month. The clothes in which I had taken such pride at first became less resplendent, until I felt it as a disgrace to go to church in them. But it became clear to me that this was yet another of the trials I was called upon to undergo, and I endured it, until I almost took pleasure in the darns on my sleeves and elbows.

At this time I was invited to the wedding of Hori's son, Kedar. They marry young, these people! It was an occasion which surmounted religious differences, and it was a distinct pleasure to me to be again with the family, for their attitude had changed. They had become reconciled to my Presbyterianism and indeed treated me with respect for my profession, a respect which I fear, was sometimes missing in the attitude of my superiors and even my pupils. The marriage rites distressed me. The make-shift though beautiful tent, the coconut-palm arches hung with clusters of fruit, the use of things like mango leaves and grass and saffron, the sacrificial fire, all these things filled me with shame rather than delight. But the rites were only a small part of the celebrations. There was much good food, strictly vegetarian but somehow extremely tempting; and after a period of distaste for Indian food, I had come back to it again. The food, I say, was rich. The music and the dances were thrilling. The tent and the illuminations had a charm which not even our school hall had on concert nights, though the marriage ceremony did not of course have the grace and dignity of those conducted, as proper marriages should be, in a church.

Kedar received a fabulous dowry, and his bride, of whose face I had just a glimpse when her silk veil was parted, was indeed beautiful. But such beauty has always appeared to me skin deep. Beauty in women is a disturbing thing. But beyond the beauty it is always necessary to look for the greater qualities of manners and—a thing I always remind Winston of—no one is too young or too old to learn—manners and *ways*. She was beautiful. It was sad to think of her joined to Kedar for life, but she was perhaps fitted for nothing else. No need to speak of the resplendent regalia of Kedar himself: his turban, the crown with tassels and pendant glass, his richly embroidered silk jacket, and all those other adornments which for that night concealed so well the truck-driver that he was.

I LEFT THE WEDDING profoundly saddened. I could not help reflecting on my own position and contrasting it with Hori's or even Kedar's. I was now over forty, and marriage, which in the normal way would have come to me at the age of twenty or thereabouts, was still far from me. This was my own fault. Arranged marriages like Kedar's had no part in my scheme of things. I wished to marry, as the person says in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, someone who had qualities that would wear well. My choice was severely restricted. I wished to marry a Presbyterian lady who was intelligent, well brought up and educated, and wished to marry me. This last condition, alas, I could find few willing to fulfil. And indeed I had little to offer. Among Hindus it would have been otherwise. There might have been men of substance who would have been willing to marry their daughters to a teacher, to acquire

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respectability and the glamour of a learned profession. Such a position has its strains, of course, for it means that the daughter remains, as it were, subject to her family; but the position is not without its charms.

YOU MIGHT imagine—and you would be correct—that at this time my faith was undergoing its severest strain. How often I was on the point of reneging I shudder to tell. I felt myself about to yield; I stiffened in my devotions and prayers. I reflected on the worthlessness of worldly things, but this was a reflection I found few to share. I might add here, in parenthesis and without vanity, that I had had several offers from the fathers of unconverted daughters, whose only condition was the one, about my religion, which I could not accept; for my previous caste had made me acceptable to many.

In this situation of doubt, of nightly wrestling with God, an expression whose meaning I came only then fully to understand, my fortune changed. I was appointed a headmaster. Now I can speak! How many people know of the tribulations, the pettiness, the intrigue which schoolteachers have to undergo to obtain such promotion? Such jockeying, such jealousy, such ill-will comes into play. What can I say of the advances one has to make, the rebuffs one has to suffer in silence, the waiting, the undoing of the unworthy who seek to push themselves forward for positions which they are ill-qualified to fill but which, by glibness and all the outward shows of respectability and efficiency and piety, they manage to persuade our superiors that they alone can fill? I too had my adversaries. My chief rival—but let him rest in peace! I am, I trust, a Christian, and will do no man the injustice of imagining him to persist in error even after we have left this vale of tears.

In my fortune, so opportune, I saw the hand of God. I speak in all earnestness. For without this I would surely have lapsed into the ways of darkness, for who among us can so steel himself as to resist temptation for all time? In my gratitude I applied myself with renewed dedication to my task. And it was this that doubtless evoked the gratification of my superiors which was to lead to my later elevation. For at a time when most men, worn out by the struggle, are content to relax, I showed myself more eager than before. I instituted prayers four times a day. I insisted on attendance at Sunday School. I taught Sunday School myself, and with the weight of my influence persuaded the other teachers to do likewise, so that Sunday became another day for us, a day of rest which we consumed with work for the Lord.

And I did not neglect the educational side. The blackboards all now sparkled with diagrams in chalks of various colours, projects which we had in hand. Oh, the school was such a pretty sight then! I instituted a rigid system of discipline, and forbade indiscriminate flogging by pupil teachers. All flogging I did myself on Friday afternoons, sitting in impartial judgment, as it were, on the school, on pupils as well as teachers. It is surely a better system, and I am glad to say that it has now been adopted throughout the island. The most apt pupils I kept after school, and for some trifling extra fee gave them private lessons. And the school became so involved with work as an ideal that had to be joyously pursued and not as something that had to be endured, that the usefulness of these private lessons was widely appreciated, and soon larger numbers than I could cope with were staying after school for what they affectionately termed their "private."

AND I MARRIED. It was now in my power to marry virtually anyone I pleased, and there were among the Sunday School staff not a few who made their attachment to me plain. I am not such a bad looking fellow! But I wished to marry someone who had qualities that would wear well. I was nearly fifty. I did not wish to marry someone who was much younger than myself. And it was my good fortune at this juncture to receive an offer—I hesitate to use this word, which sounds so much like the Hindu custom and reminds one of the real estate business, but here I must be frank

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—from no less a person than a schools inspector, who had an unmarried daughter of thirty-five, a woman neglected by the men of the island because of her attainments—yes, you read right—which were considerable, but not of the sort that proclaims itself to the world. In our attitude to women much remains to be changed! I have often, during these past days, reflected on marriage. Such a turning, a point in time whence so many consequences flow. I wonder what Winston, poor boy, will do when his time comes.

My establishment could not rival Hori's or Kedar's for splendour, but within it there was peace and culture such as I had long dreamed of. It was a plain wooden house, but well built, built to last, unlike so many of these modern monstrosities which I see arising these days; and it was well ordered. We had simple bentwood chairs with cane bottoms. No marble-topped tables with ball-fringed lace! No glass cabinets! I hung my treasured framed teaching diploma on the wall, with my religious pictures and some scenes of the English countryside. It was also my good fortune at this time to get an old autographed photograph of one of our first missionaries. In the decoration of our humble home my wife appeared to release all the energy and experience of her thirty-five years which had so far been denied expression.

To her, as to myself, everything came late. It was our fear, confirmed by the views of many friends who behind their expressions of goodwill concealed as we presently saw much uncharitableness, that we would be unable to have children, considering our advanced years. But they, and we, underestimated the power of prayer, for within a year of our marriage Winston was born.

THE BIRTH OF WINSTON came to us as a grace and a blessing. Yet it also filled me with anxiety, for I could not refrain from assessing the difference between our ages. It occurred to me, for instance, that he would be thirty when I was eighty. It was a disturbing thought, for the companionship of children is something which, perhaps because of my profession, I hold especially dear. My anxiety had another reason. It was that Winston, in his most formative years, would be without not only my guidance—for what guidance can a man of seventy give to a lusty youngster of twenty?—but also without my financial support.

The problem of money, strange as it might appear, considering my unexpected elevation and all its accruing benefits, was occupying the minds of both my wife and myself. For my retirement was drawing near, and my pension would scarcely be more than what I subsisted on as a simple pupil teacher. It seemed then that like those pilgrims, whose enthusiasm I admire but cannot share, I was advancing towards my goal by taking two steps forward and one step back, though in my case a likelier simile might be that I was taking one step forward and one step back. So success always turns to ashes in the mouth of those who seek it as ardently as I had! And if I had the vision and the depth of faith which I now have, I might have seen even then how completely false are the things of this world, how much they flatter only to deceive.

We were both, as I say, made restless. And now the contemplation of baby Winston was a source of much pain to both of us, for the poor innocent creature could scarcely know what anguish awaited him when we would both be withdrawn from this vale of tears. His helplessness, his dependence tortured me. I was past the age when the taking out of an insurance policy was a practicable proposition; and during my days as a simple teacher I never had the resources to do so. It seemed, then, that I was being destroyed by my own good fortune, by the fruits of all my endeavour. Yet I did not heed this sign.

I CONTINUED while I could giving private lessons. I instituted a morning session as well, in addition to the afternoon one. But I did so with a heavy heart, tormented by the thought that in a few years this privilege and its small reward would be denied me,

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for private lessons, it must be understood, are considered the prerogative of a headmaster: in this way he stamps his character on the school. My results in the exhibition examinations for boys under twelve continued to be heartening; they far surpassed those of many other country schools. My religious zeal continued unabated; and it was this zeal which, burning in those years when most men in my position would have relaxed—they, fortunate souls, having their children fully grown—it was this surprising zeal, I say, which also contributed, I feel, to my later elevation which, as you will see from the plain narration of these events, I did not seek.

My retirement drew nearer. I became fiercer at school. I wished all the boys under me could grow up at once. I was merciless towards the backward. My wife, poor creature, could not control her anxiety with as much success as myself. She had no occupation, no distracting vocation, in which her anxiety might have been consumed. She had only Winston, and this dear infant continually roused her to fears about his future. For his sake she would, I believe, have sacrificed her own life! It was not easy for her. And it required but the exercise of the mildest Christian charity to see that the reproaches she flung with increased acerbity and frequency at my head were but expressions of her anxiety. Sometimes, I must confess, I failed! And then my own unworthiness would torment me, as it torments me now.

We confided our problems to my wife's father, the schools inspector. Though we felt it unfair to let another partake of our troubles, it is nonetheless a recognised means of lightening any load which the individual finds too heavy to bear. But he, poor man, though as worried on his daughter's behalf as she was on Winston's, could offer only sympathy and little practical help. He reported that the authorities were unwilling to give me an extension of my tenure as headmaster. My despondency found expression in a display of temper, which he charitably forgave; for though he left the house, promising not to do another thing for us, he presently returned, and counselled patience.

So patient we were. I retired. I could hardly bear to remain at home, so used had I been to the daily round, the daily trials. I went out visiting, for no other reason than that I was afraid to be alone at home. My zeal, I believe, was remarked upon, though I took care to avoid the school, the scene of my late labours. I sought to take in for private lessons two or three pupils whose progress had deeply interested me. But my methods were no longer the methods that found favour! The parents of these children reported that the new headmaster had expressed himself strongly, and to my great disfavour, on the subject, to such a degree, in fact, that the progress of their children at school was being hampered. So I desisted; or rather, since the time has come for frankness, they left me.

THE SCHOOLS INSPECTOR, a regular visitor now at our humble, sad home, continued to counsel patience. I have so far refrained in this narrative from permitting my wife to speak directly; for I wish to do nothing that might increase the load she will surely have to bear, for my wife, though of considerable attainments, has not had the advantages of a formal education on which so much stress is nowadays laid. So I will refrain from chronicling the remark with which she greeted this advice of her father's. Suffice it to say that she spoke a children's rhyme without any great care for its metre or rhyme, the last of which indeed she destroyed by accidentally, in her haste, pulling down a vase from the centre-table on to the floor, where the water ran like one of the puddles which our baby Winston so lately made. After this incident relations between my wife and her father underwent a perceptible strain; and I took care to be out of the house as often as possible, and indeed it was pleasant to forget one's domestic troubles and walk abroad and be greeted as "Headmaster" by the simple village folk.

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THEN, AS IT appears has happened so regularly throughout my life, the clouds rolled away and the sky brightened. I was appointed a School Manager. The announcement was made in the most heart-warming way possible, by the schools inspector himself, anticipating the official notification by a week or so. And the occasion became a family reunion. It was truly good to see the harassed schools inspector relaxing at last, and to see father and daughter reasonably happy with one another. My delight in this was almost as great as the delight in my new dignity.

For a school managership is a good thing to come to a man in the evening of his days. It permits an exercise of the most benign power imaginable. It permits a man at a speech day function to ask for a holiday for the pupils; and nothing is as warming as the lusty and sincere cheering that follows such a request. It gives power even over headmasters, for one can make surprise visits and it is in one's power to make reports to the authorities. It is a position of considerable responsibility as well, for a school manager manages a school as much as a managing director manages a company. It is in his power to decide whether the drains, say, need to be remade entirely or need simply be plastered over to look as new; whether one coat of paint or two are needed; whether a ceiling can be partially renovated and painted over or taken out altogether and replaced. He orders the number of desks and blackboards which he considers necessary, and the chalks and the stationery. It is, in short, a dignity ideally suited to one who has led an active life and is dismayed by the prospect of retirement. It brings honour as well as reward. It has the other advantage that school managers are like civil servants; they are seldom dismissed; and their honours tend to increase rather than diminish.

I entered on my new tasks with zeal, and once again all was well at our home. My wife's father visited us regularly, as though, poor man, anxious to share the good fortune for which he was to a large measure responsible. I looked after the school, the staff, the pupils. I visited all the parents of the pupils under my charge and spoke to them of the benefits of education, the dangers of absenteeism, and so on. I know I will be forgiven if I add that from time to time, whenever the ground appeared ripe, I sowed the seed of Presbyterianism or at any rate doubt among those who continued in the ways of darkness. Such zeal was unknown among school managers. I cannot account for it myself. It might be that my early austerity and ambition had given me something of the crusading zeal. But it was inevitable that such zeal should have been too much for some people to stomach.

FOR ALL HIS HONOUR, for all the sweet cheers that greet his request for a holiday for the pupils, the school manager's position is one that sometimes attracts adverse and malicious comment. It is the fate of anyone who finds himself in a position of power and financial responsibility. The rumours persisted; and though they did not diminish the esteem in which I was so clearly held by the community—at the elections, for example, I was approached by all five candidates and asked to lend my voice to their cause, a situation of peculiar difficulty, which I resolved by promising all five to remain neutral, for which they were effusively grateful—it is no good thing for a man to walk among people who every day listen eagerly—for flesh is frail, and nothing attracts our simple villagers as much as scurrilous gossip—to slanders against himself. It was beneath my dignity, or rather, the dignity of my position, to reply to such attacks; and in this situation I turned, as I was turning with growing frequency, to my wife's father for advice. He suggested that I should relinquish one of my managerships, to indicate my disapproval of the gossip and the little esteem in which I held worldly honour. For I had so far succeeded in my new functions that I was now the manager of three schools, which was the maximum number permitted.

I followed his advice. I relinquished the managership of a school which was in a con-

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dition so derelict that not even repeated renovations could efface the original gimcrackery of its construction. This school had been the cause of most of the rumours, and my relinquishing of it attracted widespread comment and was even mentioned in the newspapers. It remained dear to me, but I was willing for it to go into other hands. This action of mine had the effect of stilling rumours and gossip. And the action proved to have its own reward, for some months later my wife's father, ever the bearer of good tidings, intimated that there was a possibility of a new school being put up in the area. I was thoroughly suited for its management; and he, the honest broker between the authorities and myself, said that my name was being mentioned in this connection. I was at that time manager of only two schools; I was entitled to a third. He warmly urged me to accept. I hesitated, and my hesitations were later proved to be justified. But the thought of a new school fashioned entirely according to my ideas and principles was too heady. I succumbed to temptation. If now I could only go back and withdraw that acceptance! The good man hurried back with the news; and within a fortnight I received the official notification.

I MUST CONFESS that during the next few months I lost sight of my doubts in my zeal and enthusiasm for the new project. My two other schools suffered somewhat. For if there is a thing to delight the heart of the school manager, it is the management of a school not yet built. But, alas! We are at every step reminded of the vanity of worldly things. How often does it happen that a person, placed in the position he craves, a position which he is in every way suited to fill, suddenly loses his grip! Given the opportunity for which he longs, he is unable to make use of it. The effort goes all into the striving.

So now it happened with me. Nearly everything I touched failed to go as it should. I, so careful and correct in assessments and estimates, was now found repeatedly in error. None of my calculations were right. There were repeated shortages and stoppages. The school progressed far more slowly than I would have liked. And it was no consolation to me to find that in this moment I was alone, in this long moment of agony! Neither to my wife nor to her father could I turn for comfort. They savoured the joy of my managership of a new school without reference to me. I had my great opportunity; they had no doubt I would make use of it; and I could not bear disillusioning them or breaking into their happiness with my worries.

My errors attracted others errors. My errors multiplied, I tell you! To cover up one error I had to commit twenty acts of concealment, and these twenty had to be concealed. I felt myself caught in a curious inefficiency that seemed entirely beyond my control, something malignant, powered by forces hostile to myself. Until at length it seemed that failure was staring me in the face, and that my entire career would be forgotten in this crowning failure. The building went up, it is true. It had a respectable appearance. It looked a building. But it was far from what I had visualised. I had miscalculated badly, and it was too late to remedy the errors. Its faults, its weaknesses would be at once apparent even to the scantily trained eye. And now night after night I was tormented by this failure of mine. With the exercise of only a little judgment it could so easily have been made right. Yet now the time for that was past! Day after day I was drawn to the building, and every day I hoped that by some miracle it would have been effaced during the night. But there it always stood, a bitter reproach.

Matters were not made easier for me by the reproaches of my wife and her father. They both rounded on me and said with justice that my failure would involve them all. And the days went by! I could not—I have never liked bickering, the answering of insult with insult—I could not reproach them with having burdened me with such an enterprise at the end of my days. I did it for their glory, for I had acquired sufficient to last me until the end of my days. I did it for my wife

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and her father, and for my son Winston. But who will believe me? Who will believe that a man works for the glory of others, except he work for the glory of God. They reproached me. They stood aside from me. In this moment of need they deserted me.

THEY WERE bitter days. I went for long walks through our villages in the cool of the evening. The children ran out to greet me. Mothers looked up from their cooking, fathers from their perches on the roadside culverts, and greeted me, "Headmaster!" And soon my failure would be apparent even to the humblest among them. I had to act quickly. Failures should be destroyed. The burning down of a school is an unforgivable thing, but there are surely occasions when it can be condoned, when it is the only way out. Surely this was such an occasion! It is a drastic step. But it is one that has been taken more than once in this island. So I argued with myself. And always the answer was there: my failure had to be destroyed, not only for my own sake, but for the sake of all those, villagers included, whose fates were involved with mine.

Once I had made up my mind, I acted with decision. It was that time of year, mid-November, when people are beginning to think of Christmas to the exclusion of nearly everything else. This served my purpose well. I required—with what shame I now confess it—certain assistants, for it was necessary for me to be seen elsewhere on the day of the accident. Much money, much of what we had set aside for the future of our son Winston had to go on this. And already it had been necessary to seal the lips of certain officials who had rejoiced in my failure and were willing to proclaim it to the world. But at last it was ready. On Boxing Day we would go to Port of Spain, to the races. When we returned the following day, the school would be no more. I say "we," though my wife had not been apprised of my intentions.

With what fear, self-reproach, and self-disgust I waited for the days to pass! When I heard the Christmas carols, ever associated for me with the indefinable sweetness of Christmas Eve—which I now once more feel, thanks to my decision, though underneath there is a sense of doom and destruction, deserved, but with their own inevitable reward—when I heard carols and Christmas commercials on the radio, my heart sank; for it seeemed that I had cut myself off from all about me, that once more I had become a stranger to the faith which I profess. So these days passed in sorrow, in nightly frenzies of prayer and self-castigation. Regret assailed me. Regret for what might have been, regret for what was to come. I was sinking, I felt, into a pit of defilement whence I could never emerge.

Of all this my wife knew nothing. But then she asked one day, "What have you decided to do?" and, without waiting for my reply, at once drew up such a detailed plan, which corresponded so closely to what I had myself devised, that my heart quailed. For if, in this moment of my need, when the deepest resource was needed, I could devise a plan which might have been devised by anyone else, then discovery was certain. And to my shame, Winston, who only two or three days before had been teasing me with my previous unbaptised name, Winston took part in this discussion, with no appearance of shame on his face, only thrill and—sad am I to say it—a pride in me greater than I had ever seen the boy display.

HOW CAN ONE tell of the workings of the human heart? How can one speak of the urge to evil—an urge of which Christians more than anyone else are so aware—and of the countervailing urge to good? You must remember that this is the season of goodwill. And goodwill it was. For goodwill was what I was feeling towards all. At every carol my heart melted. Whenever a child rushed towards me and cried, "Headmaster!" I was tormented by grief. For the sight of the unwashed creatures, deprived so many of them of schooling, which matters so much in those early years, and the absence of which ever afterwards makes itself felt, condemning a human being to an animal-like

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existence, the sight of these creatures, grateful towards me who had on so many evenings gone among them propagating the creed with what energy I could, unmanned me. They were proud of their new school. They were even prouder of their association with the man who had built it.

Everywhere I felt rejected. I went to church as often as I could, but even there I found rejection. And as the time drew nearer the enormity of what I proposed grew clearer to me. It was useless to tell myself that what I was proposing had been often done. The carols, the religious services, the talk of birth and life, they all unmanned me.

I walked among the children as one who had it in his power to provide or withhold blessing, and I thought of that other Walker, who said of those among whom I walked that they were the blessed, and that theirs was the kingdom of heaven. And as I walked it seemed that at last I had seized the true essence of the religion I had adopted, and whose worldly success I had with such energy promoted. So that it seemed that these trials I was undergoing had been reserved to the end of my days, so that only then I could have a taste of the ecstasy about which I had so far only read. With this ecstasy I walked. It was Christmas Eve. It is Christmas Eve. My head felt drawn out of my body. I had difficulty in assessing the size and distance of objects. I felt myself tall. I felt myself part of the earth and yet removed.

And: "No!" I said to my wife at tea time. "No, I will not disgrace myself by this act of cowardice. Rather, I will proclaim my failure to the world and ask for my due punishment."

SHE BEHAVED AS I expected. She had been busy putting up all sorts of Christmas decorations, expensive ones from the United States, which are all the rage now, so unlike the simple decorations I used to see in the homes of our early missionaries before the war. But how changed is the house to which we moved! How far has simplicity vanished and been replaced by show! And I gloried in it!

She begged me to change my mind. She summoned Winston to her help. They both wept and implored me to go through with our plan. But I was firm. I do believe that if the schools inspector were alive, he would also have been summoned to plead with me. But he, fortunate man, passed away some three weeks ago, entrusting his daughter and grandson to my care; and this alone is my fear, that by gaining glory for myself I might be injuring them. But I was firm. And then there started another of those scenes with which I had become only too familiar, and the house which that morning was filled with the enthusiasm of Winston was changed into one of mourning. Winston sobbed, tears running down his plump cheeks and down his well-shaped nose to his firm top lip, pleading with me to burn the school down, and generally behaving as though I had deprived him of a bonfire. And then a number of things were destroyed by his mother, and she left the house with Winston, vowing never to see me again, never to be involved in the disgrace which was sure to come.

And so here I sit, waiting not for Christmas, but in this house where the autographed photograph of one of our earliest missionaries gazes down at me through his rich beard and luxuriant eyebrows, and where the walls carry so many reminders of my past life of endeavour and hardship and struggle and triumph and also, alas, final failure, I wait for the day after Boxing Day, after the races to which we were to have gone, for the visit of the inspectors of the Audit Department. The house is lonely and dark. The radios play the Christmas songs. I am very lonely. But I am strong. And here I lay down my pen. My hand tires; the beautiful letters we were taught to fashion at the mission school have begun to weaken and to straggle untidily over the ruled paper; and someone is knocking.

DECEMBER 27. How can one speak of the ways of the world, how can one speak of the tribulations that come one's way? Even expiation is denied me. For even as I wrote the last sentence of the above account, there came a knocking at my door,

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and I went to open unto him who knocked. And lo, there was a boy, bearing tidings. And behold, towards the west the sky had reddened, and the boy informed me that the school was ablaze. What could I do? My world fell about my ears. Even final expiation, final triumph, it seemed, was denied me. Certain things are not for me. In this moment of anguish and despair my first thought was for my wife. Where had she gone? I went out to seek her. When I returned, after a fruitless errand, I discovered that she and Winston had come back to seek me. Smiling through our tears, we embraced. So it was Christmas after all for us. And, with lightened heart, made heavy only by my wrestling with the Lord, we went to the races on Boxing Day, yesterday. We did not gamble. It is against our principles. The inspectors from the Audit Department sent word to-day that they would not, after all, come.

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Digging

One midnight, after a day when lilies
lift themselves out of the ground while you watch them,
and you come into the house at dark
your fingers grubby with digging, your eyes
vague with the pleasure of digging,

let a wind raised from the South
climb through your bedroom window, lift you in its arms
—you have become as small as a seed—
and carry you out of the house, over the black garden,
spinning and fluttering,

and drop you in cracked ground.
The dirt will be cool, rough to your clasped skin
like a man you have never known.
You will die into the ground
in a deep sleep, surrendered to water.

You will wake suffering
a widening pain in your side, a breach
gapped in your tight ribs
where a green shoot struggles to lift itself upwards
through the tomb of your dead flesh

to the sun, to the air of your garden
where you will blossom
in the shape of your own self, thoughtless
with flowers, speaking
to bees, in the language of green and yellow, white and red.

Donald Hall

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POETRY

Guides to Shakespeare

By John Wain

> *"A writer must never write about the extraordinary. That is for the journalist."*
> JAMES JOYCE to DJUNA BARNES (1919)

GOOD NEWS. Shakespeare is no longer impenetrable. There is no need, any more, for the playgoer or reader to tolerate fantastically absurd interpretations, stemming from the vanity of critics and producers rather than from a concern to bring Shakespeare to his natural audience, on the grounds that no one knows what Shakespeare "means," and therefore it is all right to make his work an echo-chamber for one's own bright ideas. This bottomless "obscurity" of Shakespeare has for centuries been accepted as a blank cheque for any self-preening ingenuity, particularly in the theatre. Such ingenuity is blatantly Philistine. It exalts its own bag of tricks above the wisdom of Shakespeare. In what follows I shall be trying to explain, with the same pathetic and long-winded sense of hopelessness as overcame Humbert Humbert in trying to explain anything to Lolita, that this is no longer necessary. That Shakespeare can be seen quite clearly, enjoyed quite straightforwardly, by those who want to. And that those who don't want to, whose concern is with their own cleverness, would be better employed writing TV commercials. And also that the most profitable approach to Shakespeare's work is not backward from the twentieth century but forward from antiquity and the immemorial. He has more in common with the folk-imagination, with the collective drive of mankind towards fable and metaphor, than with the print-fostered "individuality" of the modern author with his copyrights and his publicity photographs. Myth, saga, and ballad will help us to approach him without fake expectations: the medieval "mystery plays" and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* will prove better range-finders than the virtuoso exercises of the modern theatre.

To begin with, we must note that scholarship has brought the Renaissance into much clearer focus. Work that wasn't necessarily designed to revolutionise the study of Shakespeare has in fact done so. Once a book like A. O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* (1936) had been published, it was impossible to mistake Shakespeare's central meaning. Impossible, that is, not to realise that his main concern was to make a series of statements about order—order in the cosmos, order in the state, order within the human psyche—and the incalculable results of challenging this order and seeking to overthrow it. That, therefore, his plays have themes, or rather that each one is an individual variation on one grand theme. That it follows in turn from this that they cannot be simply vehicles for character-study.

Nineteenth-century criticism, culminating with Bradley in 1904, tried to get at the meaning of Shakespeare's plays by treating them as a gallery of portraits. Its object was to dissect the characters of the plays and discuss their motives. Since the literature of their own day was dominated by the realistic novel, these critics applied the method derived from a study of Scott and Dickens to the study of Shakespeare. It took two explosions to shift this road-block. The first was, as I have said, the co-operative scholarly work of bringing the Renaissance into focus. There is more genuine help in a work of intelligent popularisation like Theodore Spencer's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* than in the most brilliant *aperçus* of Coleridge: and if it hurts to say such a thing, let us get hurt. The other explosion was in imaginative writing itself. Since the criticism of any age comes into being in an attempt to explain what the artist is doing, there could be no new criticism of Shakespeare until Mallarmé, Proust, Yeats, Joyce, Pound, and Eliot had made a new literature.

The old criticism was literal-minded. Nourished on realistic fiction, it ignored the symbolic and poetic nature of Shakespeare's work. It gave us not themes but characters: not poetic drama but costume drama in which the protagonists, for some quaint reason, spoke poetry. In the theatre,

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it was allied with a star system which brought people into the theatre not to see *Hamlet* but to see Irving as Hamlet, not to see *Cymbeline* but to see Ellen Terry as Imogen. This was the age when Shaw could get away with declaring that he felt contempt for the mind of Shakespeare. No one, in those days, could see that mind in all its power and force.

Shakespeare knows best—if only that slogan could be framed and hung on the wall of every green-room, every Features Editor's office, every critic's study! But to say this is always to be brushed aside with the accusation that one is stuck to antiquarian interests. "The sixteenth century was a long time ago," runs the stock argument, "and we live to-day. To reconstruct Shakespeare's ideas in their pure form is to make a historical exercise out of what should be living experience." Balderdash! The people who talk in this strain do so because they have never slowed down long enough to find out what Shakespeare's ideas *are*. Till they have done so, how can they assert that these ideas have none but antiquarian interest?

Actually, of course, Shakespeare's statements on order, the order necessary to happiness and finally to mere survival, agree very substantially with what the most influential minds of our own century have been concerned to say. "Integration of the personality"—what is it but order? The Lawrentian ideal of a full instinctual life which renders those who live it immune from the blasting and withering of modern industrial civilisation—what is it, again, but order? Who are the Organisation Men and the Exurbanites and the rest of the damned, but people who are trying to live in defiance of wholeness, *i.e.*, of order? Is Shakespeare's central point of view so absurd that it cannot be given a chance to peep through, even for a moment?

Criticism of Shakespeare is nothing if it is not an attempt to allow the Shakespearean vision to shine through the jungle of conflicting egotisms and irrelevances. And the most direct way to do this is to try to remove difficulties which have grown up in the last three centuries. Some of these difficulties are a mere matter of information; I say "mere," though the information may be very difficult to recover, and one has nothing but gratitude for patient scholars who bring the resources of considerable knowledge to bear on the solving of small particular problems. But the larger difficulties are a matter of perspective. We are separated from Shakespeare by three centuries of a culture dominated by the printed page. And not only that but increasingly, since the mid-eighteenth century, by the newspaper. We see his plays through the mist of a literature largely naturalistic. Character-criticism with its crippling literal-mindedness has gone, but the full realisation of the mythopoeic nature of Shakespeare's work has not yet come in. As long ago as 1929, G. Wilson Knight published *Myth and Miracle*, which I take to be the most influential single work on Shakespeare in our time. A whole generation of critics has buttressed Knight's position, even when they were challenging his particular conclusions. But the imaginative adjustment has not been made, except in the minds of highly-conscious literary people—and Shakespeare is not the possession of highly-conscious literary people only. The theatre, in which he worked and to which he gave his life, is still dominated by Edwardian attitudes. Yet it is the theatre which could so easily have made the break-through to a genuine Shakespearean perspective. What literary critics have accomplished with great difficulty and with the expense of millions of words, the theatre might have accomplished with no strain and no controversy: simply by putting on the plays as they were originally envisaged, and letting them speak for themselves. Seen as it really is, through no distorting dazzle of "cleverness," any mature Shakespearean play emerges at once as myth. It is felt as such without verbalisation, by people to whom the word "myth" has no meaning except the contemptuous one "old wives' tale." Its symbols work perfectly, communicating to people who don't know and don't want to know what a symbol is. All they need is a chance to come through without filtering, and without being "explained" by minds with a hunger for the literal.

For an example of this disabling literalness, I turn up the nearest popular annotated edition that lies to hand: *Macbeth* in the "Folger Library General Reader's Shakespeare" (1959), where the text of the play is interleaved with an explanatory commentary by two internationally authoritative scholars. When they arrive at the "Apparition" of "a Child Crowned, with a tree in his hand" in IV, i, these editors provide the take-it-or-leave-it gloss, "Duncan's son Malcolm, bearing a symbol of his subterfuge to surprise Macbeth by disguising his men as trees." But this explanation makes the vision not a symbol but a cipher. Symbols are not codes, to be cracked and their message extracted. They reverberate: they have independent life: they contain many "meanings" within the dramatic and poetic symbiosis in which they have their being. In that particular case, for instance, the idea of Malcolm is certainly present in the figure of a child crowned, but so is the idea of Banquo's issue, whom the witches predicted would be kings, and for whose sake Macbeth, in the great soliloquy which reveals Banquo's essential func-

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tion in the play, cries out that he has been duped.

If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered:
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!

And the next vision he sees is a line of kings, eight of them, with Banquo bringing up the rear. As for the business about the "leavy screens" whereby Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane, that is symbolic in itself, so that Shakespeare would hardly need to write in a second symbol to symbolise the first. Macbeth has aligned himself with everything that is sterile, death-dealing, blasted and blasting. The characters who represent the play's "positives" —Duncan, Banquo, Malcolm, even the off-stage Edward the Confessor—are given metaphors which suggest growth and fertility. "I have begun to plant you," says Duncan in his gratitude to Macbeth, "and will labour To make you full of growing." And Malcolm, on coming to the throne, speaks of "What's more to do, Which would be planted newly with the time." Edward of England has the power to heal terrible illness with his royal touch, and "'tis spoken To the succeeding royalty he leaves The healing benediction." The good characters reproduce, the bad are sterile. Lady Macbeth's nipple-plucking speech does not, basically, contradict Macduff's grief-stricken "He has no children": if ever the Macbeths produced a child, no memory of it remains in their bones; they are for death, not life. And when the green boughs are carried by the avenging army towards Macbeth's stronghold, the symbolism embraces not only Macbeth's deception by "these juggling fiends . . . That palter with us in a double sense," not only the supreme irony that he, the destroyer of the natural, should have been lulled by ambiguous prophecy into the faith that "our high-placed Macbeth Shall live the lease of nature," but also typifies the green and growing things that will bury the memory of Macbeth's "barren sceptre." One needn't be a "Shakespearean scholar," whatever that is, to interpret the great pivotal symbols in his work—but one does need a glimmering of awareness about what a literary symbol *is*.

SHAKESPEARE moved from the sophisticated to the unsophisticated, from the current and topical to the fundamental and symbolic. His early comedies show him joining in the chic Italianate revels that placed him at one bound far out of reach of the slower mentality of rural Warwickshire and made him a successful rival of the University Wits. His early tragic vein is equally of the moment, whether he is telling a romantic Italian love-story, with the young couple outwitting the tedious grown-ups, and giving it a tragic instead of a happy ending, or portraying in Richard III a Renaissance megalomaniac patterned after Marlowe and invoking the familiar turnip-ghost of Machiavelli. But as he matures, material begins to creep in that we can only describe as deriving from the collective imagination. His plots begin to resemble folk-tales; the characters become archetypal as well as increasingly complex; they grow outwards in psychological realism, but at the same time put down deeper and deeper tap-roots into the world of dream, fairy-tale, and the collective unconscious. In *Hamlet*, folk-tale material appears in a setting derived from history and politics. In *Lear*, the entire opening situation of the play comes from the same imaginative area as Jack the Giant-killer or Cinderella and her ugly sisters. Make a short prose summary of the plot of, say, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and you find yourself in the same world. The Duke in *Measure For Measure*, who announces that he is going away on a journey, and instead puts on disguise and moves among his people so as to see them more closely, is a pure fairy-tale figure. And in the last plays of all, the "romances," even psychological realism shrinks and leaves the bulk of the interest centred in the mythopoeic. *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's last play, is the only one for which no source has been discovered. On the other hand, everything in the play can be paralleled from widely-diffused material which crops up again and again. As Frank Kermode puts it in the Introduction to his edition of the play in the "Arden" series:

> Ultimately the source of *The Tempest* is an ancient *motif*, of almost universal occurrence, in saga, ballad, fairy-tale, and folk-tale. The existence of this story accounts for the many analogues to *The Tempest*. That both Prospero and the father of Ayrer's Sidea [A German play which offers the closest analogue to Shakespeare's] are irascible is, in the last analysis, explained by the fact that they descend from a bad-tempered giant-magician. It is likewise a feature of the archetype that the princess, like Miranda and Sidea, should aid the captive prince in his task and frankly own her love. The log-bearing is also a very ancient feature, and appears in the story at a primitive stage when the task was to chop down the wood as a preparation for the second task, which was to plough the ground; later the prince had to reap the harvest, and all these tasks were to be accomplished in one day. The Jason story suggests itself as an early analogue, and the ramifications of the fable have been traced throughout Europe and the Orient.

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In other words, Shakespeare's art, unlike the characteristic modern writer's, does not depend on striking out brand-new material, but rather on the fusing together in a new whole of components that had become familiar inmates of the European consciousness. Where modern writers are like journalists, each striving to scoop an "exclusive," Shakespeare is more like a force of nature which gathers up long-recognised material and organises it into a new and more valuable synthesis.

THIS IS THE TRUE NATURE of Shakespeare's originality. His mind did not play over the surface of things. It started from the deepest layer and moved upwards, gathering up material and transforming it as it went. This is so unfamiliar to the 20th-century mind that young students, on approaching Shakespeare for the first time, are often surprised to learn that he did not make up his own plots. To them, a reliance on stories already to hand suggests a weakness, a failure to come up with something fresh. In fact, it is to the credit of the Elizabethans that they were not interested in the kind of "originality" that would impress a Bernard Shaw as it impresses any pulp-magazine editor. They were still rooted in the mediæval world in which the story matters more than the man who recounts it. To Chaucer, for instance, the poet's main task is to re-tell, freshly and effectively, the tales which have always held men's attention. He enjoys pointing out that what he is giving the reader is to be found in "olde bokes." He is plugging the reader in to a source of power, power which transcends any individual contribution. So that a writer like Malory will even claim a source where none exists; it gives dignity to the material.

THE MODERN folk-singer is in the same imaginative tradition. To appreciate the balance between "tradition" and "individual talent" in an oral culture, we have to make the mental adjustment described in Lord's *The Singer of Tales*.[1] For many years even scholars adept in the field of folk-culture had bedevilled research by pushing backward and backward in the search for "originals." Whereas Professor Lord says roundly:

> The truth of the matter is that our concept of "the original," of "the song," makes no sense in oral tradition. To us it seems so basic, so logical, since we are brought up in a society in which writing has fixed the norm of a stable first creation in art, that we feel there must be an "original" for everything. The first singing in oral tradition does not coincide with this script of the "original."

In this world, it makes nonsense to speak of "originals" and "variants." The expression "oral transmission" has done its own quota of harm here, since it implies a fixed original which minstrel hands down to minstrel. So has talk of "anonymous" creation. The singer of tales has a name; he is well known to his audience. To call folk-epic "anonymous" is to hand over to a vaguely-defined abstraction the job that is actually done by individual living men. As Mr. Lord goes on:

> ... The author of an oral epic, that is, the text of a performance, is the performer, the singer before us. Given normal eyesight on the part of the spectator, he is not multiple, but single. The author of any of our texts, unless an editor has tampered with it, is the man who dictated, sang, chanted, or otherwise gave expression to it. A performance is unique; it is a creation, not a reproduction, and it can therefore only have one author.
>
> Actually, only the man with writing seems to worry about this, just as only he looks for the non-existent, illogical, and irrelevant "original." Singers deny that they are the creators of the song. They learned it from other singers. We know now that *both* are right, each according to his meaning of "song." To attempt to find the first singer of a song is as futile as to try to discover the first singing. ... From that point of view, a song has no "author" but a multiplicity of "authors," each singing being a creation, each singing having its own single "author." This is, however, a very different concept of multiple authorship from that, or more properly those, in general use among Homerists.

Professor Lord, and his predecessor Milman Parry, both found modern Yugoslav folk-epic sung by men who claim to be handing on their material just as they learnt it, with no personal intrusion of their own—and make this claim, with no sense of contradiction, even when their own version is highly idiosyncratic. It is only the culture of the printed book that draws clear lines between one man's contribution and another's. To this extent Shakespeare, as Marshall McLuhan has indicated in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and elsewhere, belongs to the pre-literate world, as is evidenced by his lack of concern for the printed immortality of his "Works." And if we grasp this it will help us to realise that the legendary and fairy-tale element in Shakespeare's work is entirely un-selfconscious. We look back at Shakespeare across two centuries of a literature predominantly realistic, during which the use of legend and folk-tale stamped a writer as either antiquarian or elvish. For a modern artist—for Grieg, say—to use material from folk-culture usually indicates

[1] Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Harvard University Press, 1960).

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some consciously worked-out programme of getting back to the roots. To Shakespeare, it was as instinctive as breathing. The world of commerce, logic, and industrialism swept the folk-imagination into the nursery and kept it there. But in Shakespeare's time, as in Ovid's, this had not happened.

Ovid, Shakespeare's favourite poet, deserves to be kept in mind. Like Shakespeare, he did not invent "original material." He used the myths that were familiar to everyone, and his art consisted in the imaginative skill with which he orchestrated story with story, and clothed narrative with words and images. And this remained the chief claim of the literary artist until well after Shakespeare's day. The modern folk-singer who assures his audience that he is handing on the story just as it came to him is in a tradition which goes straight back to antiquity. The England into which Shakespeare was born was still largely mediæval. And when the mediæval poet does not announce that he is copying from a source, he announces, like Langland or Guillaume de Lorris, that he is dreaming. Why? Because the dream had a respectability as universally accepted as the respectability of tradition. In both cases, the implied appeal was to the collective unconscious. Depth-psychology has demonstrated that every human mind is basically similar once we dig down for a certain distance. The Middle Ages had no depth-psychology, but they were just as convinced of this truth as we are; a dream was always a message, as it is to Jungian analysis. Of course the mediæval poet who used the dream-convention did not expect to be taken literally; he was using an agreed formula. Mr. John Vyvyan, in his recent book, *Shakespeare and the Rose of Love*,[2] has a discussion of the *Roman de la Rose* in which he remarks, aptly:

> The courtship of the Rose, as Guillaume de Lorris relates it, is a dream. But it is not a naturalistic one, for dream-poetry in the Middle Ages was a literary form with its own conventions. It is a form that is quite lost to contemporary poetry, and perhaps the only art that could bring it to life for us to-day is the ballet. ... To think of *Swan Lake* or *Les Sylphides* is enough to remind us how easily ballet slips into a world of dream, allegory, and romance, and yet always retains the lucid wakefulness of finely disciplined and highly stylised art. I do not wish to press the analogy unduly; but these are precisely the qualities that Guillaume de Lorris displays, and his kind of poetry, also like the ballet, was originally a courtly creation, addressed to the most cultivated minds of the age. The appreciating of such art is rather like a love-affair—mere passivity on one side will not do; it requires creative activity in the audience as well as in the artist.

By inviting us to explore his dream-landscape, the mediæval poet is inviting our participation. To read such poetry, Mr. Vyvyan remarks, is like watching ballet. Or, I would add, listening to the kind of folk-singer described by Professor Lord. Or taking part in any kind of entertainment that seeks to involve the audience in a re-enactment of familiar material. The novel, with its "plot-interest" that keeps the reader turning the pages, is a packaged article. It belongs to the world of consumer-goods. Poetry does not. Neither the nursery rhyme nor the epic, neither Kipling nor Mallarmé. Shakespeare would have understood immediately the point of the remark by Joyce which appears as epigraph to this essay, except that he would have wondered why anything so obvious should need to be put into words. He had not lived through two centuries of journalism and realistic fiction.

The result is that Shakespeare's work moves easily into the domain of myth. It is a pity that this word has been so overworked in literary criticism, but it cannot be helped. After all, once the scientific study of anthropology had destroyed the old patronising attitude towards "primitive" peoples, it became inevitable that the kind of "belief" involved in "believing in a myth" should be seen as what it is: a life-giving force. In our society, we are trained from babyhood to put our trust in reason; nothing is to be believed that hasn't a rational underpinning. But to the savage, a belief is not something he holds in his head and refers to as one might consult a watch. It is something he lives. He believes with his body. Myth, which used to be regarded as a consciously contrived means of making sense of the inexplicable in nature, is nowadays seen as a life-pattern.

Myth is participation. But poetry is also participation. The relationship between the poet and his reader, or listener, is not a mere producer-consumer relationship such as we see in the case of the novelist. The reader who responds to the rhythms and images of a poem, often without being able to say what he is responding to, is participating. Hence the sneer that "poetry is read only by poets" is literally true. The readers of poetry may not be poets in the sense that they write poetry, but they are poets in that they participate in the poetic act. Whereas the readers of a novel are consumers only; they sit back and let the novelist work on them.

Poetry is participation. An audience watching a Shakespeare play is carried along on a tide

[2] John Vyvyan (Chatto & Windus, 1960).

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of imagery and rhythm that is, largely, subliminal. To take a crude example: in *Macbeth*, a play about usurpation, one finds every so often an image of borrowed and ill-fitting garments. Miss Caroline Spurgeon, when she had the idea of counting Shakespeare's images and seeing what could be deduced from them, discovered this along with a host of similar things. But what about the centuries during which no one had noticed these images? Had they lain idle? Of course not: every time the play was acted, the continual drizzle of references to ill-fitting clothes had reached the audience—subliminally, if you like. Just as Shakespeare no doubt put them in subliminally. It is unlikely that he said to himself, before settling down to a day's writing, "I must remember to work in some references to ill-fitting clothes." It was simply that once he began writing, the material came up from his unconscious and these images were there ready-made. By allowing itself to be acted on in this way, the audience was taking part in a dialogue. It was participating.

If myth is participation, and poetry is participation, it follows that poetic drama will naturally approach the status of myth even if there is no anthropologically-minded critic anywhere in sight to utter the word. And it follows in turn that the most deadly enemy of this form of life is the proscenium arch. When actors are speaking verse on an apron stage, with no scenery and no jolting divisions into Act and Scene, the audience, clustered round them on three sides, is easily able to maintain the dialogue. Push the actors back on to a picture-frame stage and the dialogue becomes difficult. Divide them from the audience by an orchestra pit and a row of footlights, and it becomes impossible. The proscenium arch makes participation out of the question for the audience. It forces the actors to speak exclusively to one another, whereas in the Elizabethan theatre they spoke half to one another and half to the audience.

This, I believe, is the answer to the old riddle: why did the poetic drama die at the beginning of the 17th century and why have all attempts to re-float it, even by the most gifted poets, been failures? Had Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Byron, Tennyson, Browning, and Beddoes not enough poetic talent between them to write one memorable verse-play? It seems unlikely. The evident answer is that they were writing for a theatre which made verse drama impossible. This view is confirmed by theatrical history. When the theatres were re-opened in the 1660s after the Puritan interregnum, the Elizabethan and Jacobean tradition was lost, and the proscenium arch was introduced. But not at one bound. Closer investigation reveals that the first Restoration theatres still had an apron stage, though it was reduced in area. The proscenium arch was there, but it was at the rear of the stage, and not all the action took place beneath it. Painted scenery, too, was not yet paramount. The arch contained shutters, which were opened, in full view of the audience, to show a new scene. In other words, the Restoration theatre was a compromise. And the Restoration verse-drama is also a compromise. The natural-sounding blank verse of the Elizabethan drama, which could reproduce the rhythms of conversation as well as the flights of lyricism and oratory, has gone. In its place we find the heroic couplet. And the heroic couplet, with its booming and chiming rhymes, is a public address system. It is the amplifier which was needed to pitch the verse to an audience no longer on three sides of the stage.

Once the full picture-frame stage has been developed, even the couplet will no longer work. Only in our own day, with improvised theatres in churches and barns, has that kind of participation again become possible. It was a very fortunate combination of circumstances that brought Mr. T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* to the boards in 1935, as part of the Canterbury Cathedral festival. And even these circumstances would not have borne fruit had the dramatist not realised the nature of his opportunity.

WHAT WE HAVE TO DO, in fact, if we want to enjoy Shakespeare's work, to profit by it as part of our usable experience, is to get his plays out from behind the proscenium arch, sweep away all clever-clever producers and virtuoso actors, and let the work speak for itself. This means, in practice, a careful attention to the language of the plays, and a drastic cutting-back on "production." For where myth and symbol are the never-quite-translatable reverberation of the plays, language is their concrete embodiment. The myth is never wholly reducible: we can never say, pinning it down, that x *means* y. It is too living to be dissected; it can only be experienced. The outline of what Shakespeare is saying is always quite obvious: it is always related to his central preoccupation with order. The detail, however, shimmers and flickers. It will not be cut and dried. What do Caliban and Ariel "stand for"? The Super-ego and the Id? Perhaps—but when we have said that, all we have done is to substitute two abstract terms for two palpable presences. If we are the kind of people who feel happier with abstract terms than with concrete realities, we shall feel this as an advance. But it is not an advance; it is merely the old slavery to the rational and the

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abstract that makes so much in modern life ugly and neurotic.

THE WAY to bring Shakespeare's plays down to graspable and intelligible terms is not to rationalise them, to substitute abstract for concrete, but to take hold of them through the language. Only a novice will imagine that I am saying anything new here. Much excellent criticism, notably Mr. D. A. Traversi's *An Approach to Shakespeare*, has started from this point. The more's the pity that the theatre, which could so easily have led the way in this direction, has chosen not to do so. With many admirable players, and with an audience that has come together to listen and not to read, the theatre could have given us a Shakespeare who worked outwards through language. As things are, it has given us one who works inwards through spectacle. It concentrates on giving the audience something to look at rather than something to listen to. And then comes the producer with his chic ideas, the actor with his profile, the stage-designer with his army of carpenters, the electrician with his battery of lights, and the costume designer with his sharply visual sensibility. All these are barriers which keep Shakespeare from the people he rightfully belongs to —and do so, by heaven, in the name of "audience appeal."

What the theatre has lost sight of is the fact that a Shakespearean play is also a poem. That is, it has not only the dramatic properties of structure, suspense, characterisation, and so on, but the poetic properties of image, rhythm, and symbol. An audience which is allowed to listen, in peace, to a text without too many cuts in it, will get the message—even if, on coming away from the theatre, they could not put into words what has happened to them. The effect has been achieved subliminally. To take a rough and ready example, in *Antony and Cleopatra* the reiterated images of mud and slime, the fertile mud of the Nile which is "quickened" by the sun, breeding the python and the crocodile, pushes into the auditor's mind the sense of a rich, fertile, and also vicious and dangerous element: *nostalgie de la boue*, in fact. Over and above this, we have the fact that Cleopatra's element (like Molly Bloom's) is water. Antony first sees her in a barge which *burns* on the water: in the madness of his love he swears by "the fire That quickens Nilus' slime." He, the Roman, comes from an empire whose natural habitat is the earth: it is solid, rooted, unshakeable. When earth meets water, the result is mud. Add more water, and the result is a washing away of recognisable outline. When Antony finally realises that the game is up and he has lost his leadership, he greets his attendant Eros with:

ANTONY: *Eros, thou yet behold'st me?*
EROS: *Ay, noble lord.*
ANTONY: *Sometimes we see a cloud that's dragonish;*
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendant rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon't, that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air: thou hast seen these signs;
They are black vesper's pageants.
EROS: *Aye, my lord.*
ANTONY: *That which is now a hope, even with a thought*
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct
As water is in water.
EROS: *It does, my lord.*
ANTONY: *My good knave Eros, now thy captain is*
Even such a body.

Why, at such a crucial point, does Antony halt the action to deliver a speech about clouds? The question arises naturally in minds trained within a tradition of naturalistic drama. But in fact the action is not halted. The vivid introduction, just at this point, of the image of vapour dissolving, clouds unable to hold their fierce and tangible forms of bear, lion, and dragon, a world of forms "dislimning" as water does in water, sounds the note that is specifically Antony's. The opening lines of the play contain an image of inundation—

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure—

and this "cloud" speech is his final tragic admission that his identity, his Roman-ness, has been drowned. Hence the symbol of the sea-fight, not once but twice joined, always against the advice of his soldiers, and each time lost. When he trusts to Cleopatra's element, he deserts his own.

SHAKESPEARE'S ART is rooted in language, not in spectacle, stage-business, gimmicks, or knights in armour leaping on to horses. It is an art of impersonality, concerned with operating at the deeper levels. For all its shrewd psychological realism, it is not "realistic." It approaches more closely to myth. Hence the importance of Ovid, and especially of the *Metamorphoses*.

In that poem Ovid presents a world of sharply visualised surrealist fantasy in which images of change crowd on one another so fast, and with such rapid switches of mood, that no one situa-

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tion has time to stick in the reader's mind. What sticks is rather the all-pervading atmosphere of flowing and instability, an atmosphere that was not again to be captured until the coming of the *avant-garde* cinema in the 1920s. It is the world of Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poète*, where mirrors sprout arms, the laws of gravity are suspended, the horrible and the comic jostle with the lyrical, and the spectator is less concerned with the fate of this or that individual character than with his own experience of being drawn into this surreal world and breathing its atmosphere. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Mr. L. P. Wilkinson, whose *Ovid Surveyed*[3] is the most useful brief introduction to Ovid, is sternly contemptuous of any attempts to read a deeper significance into the fables of the *Metamorphoses*. "(Ovid's) purpose in writing was clearly to entrance, and nothing more." One hears this said of Cocteau also: but if an artist manages to "entrance" his audience, what is he really doing to them? Can one, above the level of a daytime television serial, "entrance" people without involving them in some sort of view of the world? Again, Mr. Wilkinson warns:

> It is tempting, especially to the Teutonic mentality, to intellectualise these myths; to see in Pygmalion, for instance, the eternal seeker after ideal perfection, dissatisfied with the world around him; but we must not force such interpretations on stories which, whatever their mythological origin, are surely told by Ovid for their own sake, and for the psychological paradoxes which intrigued him.

The word "intrigue," in that passage, arouses one's suspicions as much as the routine gibe at German scholarship—this last curiously out of date, since it is American scholarship that provides the main target nowadays for English irritable superiority about not knowing when to stop. When people talk about being "intrigued" by a subject they usually intend to indicate a less than serious kind of interest; one is intrigued by gossip, or crossword puzzles, not by genuine intellectual or moral problems. Ovid told his tales "for their own sake" (and what was that?), or because the psychological ins and outs "intrigued" him. But Ovid was evidently a major artist, and when such an artist selects his material he does so for reasons that lie deep in the foundations of his work. The intoxicating sense of melting, changing, and dissolving in the *Metamorphoses* has always fascinated artists —visual artists in particular, since the sharp selection of detail and the visual precision in Ovid's writing are a continual challenge to them. Ezra Pound, at a formative stage in his poetic career, found himself drawn to various Renaissance re-handlings of material from the *Metamorphoses*, and I confess that, in making a study of this material a few years ago,[4] I missed the essential explanation of his interest. At the time he was poring over Ovid, Pound was well launched into the *Cantos*, a poem on the epic scale that keeps well away from Virgil and veers towards Ovid—avoiding, that is to say, the stately, settled progression of Virgil, majestically sweeping from point to point with a grand predictability, and cultivating the Ovidian technique of discontinuity, sudden jumps of focus and switches of scene. The technique, as has by now been pointed out often enough, is cinematic—indeed, it is the cinema's chief claim to recognition as a serious art that it links so directly with this tradition; if cinematic art existed before the cinema, the film need not be what conservative opinion originally labelled it, a mechanical version of the stage-play with gimmicks thrown in.

Shakespeare's relationship to Ovid moved from outside to inside, from surface to centre, in the same way as all his interests. In the early plays, it is mainly a matter of a young man's enjoyment of the fancifulness of Ovid's writing. When, in *Henry V*, Hotspur is ranting in indignation (*I iii*), trying to convince the king that his cousin Mortimer put up a brave resistance against Glendower, he can spare breath for a typically Ovidian conceit:

> *Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,*
> *Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood,*
> *Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,*
> *Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,*
> *And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank.*

The conceit has no dramatic relevance, and such fanciful by-play is out of character for Hotspur. But it was Ovidian, and that was enough. And when, in maturer years, Shakespeare ceases to feel the attraction of this merely fanciful side of Ovid, his work continues to show how deeply felt is his affinity with this poet of melting, changing, flowing, other-seeming.

IT COULD NOT BE otherwise. Shakespeare's work is one vast metamorphosis. In every story he tells, people put on disguise, alter themselves, pretend to be what they are not. Sometimes it is a matter of deliberate guile. At other times it is self-deception. Edgar in *Lear* dresses in rustic clothes and feigns insanity, while remaining perfectly rational. Malvolio, on the other hand, dresses in clothes inappropriate to his position, and is then treated as mad by the

[3] L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Surveyed* (paperback edition, Cambridge University Press, 1961).

[4] "Ovid in English," in *Preliminary Essays* (1957).

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other characters and locked in a cell. Characters exchange clothes and are taken for one another. Falstaff and Hal put on a burlesque in which each in turn speaks with the assumed voice of outraged royalty, and Hal rejects Falstaff in play before he does so in earnest. Masquerade, disguise, confusion are everywhere. Every comedy is a comedy of errors. And every tragedy is a tragedy of errors. Mistake, misassessment, illusion start the action going in every case. Iago deceives Othello, but Othello has already made himself vulnerable to deception by deserting his own world of free heroic action and wandering into the intrigue-world of super-subtle Venice. He is the outsider, his outsideness dramatised by the colour of his skin, who must believe anything he is told because he has no materials for forming his own judgment. Lear, who "hath ever but slenderly known himself," is self-deceived; Hamlet is emotionally confused; Antony is hynotised by sensual passion. Macbeth profits by the fact sadly acknowledged by Duncan, that "There's no art To find the mind's construction in the face"; but Macbeth is just as deceived by the faces he trusts in as Duncan is. In the last plays, this confusion is represented in a more purely symbolic and visual way: a shipwreck drives voyagers to the island where they must face the truth about themselves; the statue of a dead queen comes to life, Art's gift to Nature.

It is this that links Shakespeare with the folk-imagination. The witches and enchanters, dwarfs and giants, Aladdin's lamp and Cinderella's coach of folk-tale are a reflection of the universal human sense that things mysteriously change, that no two people see the same things, that the world is slipping and sliding. What the ungraspable nature of reality begins, human self-deception and error can be trusted to finish. "Realistic" literature has a short, flickering and uncertain history, appearing here and there (usually in big-city conditions) and then disappearing for centuries. Our own age is usually taken to be an age of realism, but this is merely a journalistic blunder. Actually it is an Ovidian or Shakespearean age. So much so that when a hundred per cent realistic writer appears, determined to write about nothing that could not have happened round a committee table, he becomes a nine days' wonder. People read and talk about a C. P. Snow just because he is so strange to their experience. Beckett is much more familiar: we all know the two tramps, the couple in dustbins, the woman buried up to her neck in sand. The old myths have been with us much longer than the New Men. Thus Professor John Lawlor observes:

> There is general recognition (*i.e.*, nowadays as in the "pre-Locke epoch") that a non-naturalistic art is capable of reaching us at deeper levels than are accessible to cause-effect representation. The work of a generation of scholars who have taught us to attend to the Shakespearean play as to a poem links with this general perception that correspondence with "reality" may be better achieved through myth and symbol than through unwavering adherence to "deeds and language such as men do use." Naturalism . . . has few defenders these days, whether in the theatre or the study.[5]

It is this, too, which brings out the essential one-ness of the comedies and the tragedies. They both start from error, the error of spiritual blindness which makes the protagonist an enemy of Order, and they both carry the action through to revelation and settlement. Mr. Russell A. Fraser, in his thoughtful book *Shakespeare's Poetics*,[6] has a striking passage:

> The entertainment in each case derives from the exploiting of incongruity, which takes its rise from ignorance. In comedy the incongruity may be very great. It is, however, divested by the dramatist of serious consequence. No sword is ever thrust all the way home. No character is endowed with the capacity to suffer. The auditor is involved only intellectually. He watches a game. Comedy is a-logical. It is not felt as sinister, only because the dramatist is pregnant to pity.
>
> In tragedy the ignorance of the protagonist is understood to be incorrigible, at least until the crisis is past. The decision that it should be so lies, once again, with the dramatist. It is a wholly arbitrary decision. But, once taken, it cannot be rescinded. Tragedy is logical. That is why it is supportable. The dramatist does no more than set things going. Like the God of the 18th century, he winds up the watch and departs. His protagonists, denied his protection, his intercession, are destroyed. But he does not intercede, even so. It is not that he is indifferent to them, but that he has relinquished control. No longer the prime mover, estranged from his creations, unable to mitigate their sufferings, he can do no more than utter valedictions.

Since Shakespeare's work deals with transformation and altering perspectives, it is natural that the plays should proceed by means of riddles, masquerades, the melting shapes of symbol and emblem. It is natural, too, that the result should come across with the authority of myth. And also the impersonality. Shakespeare's work, after about 1600, strikes one less and less as the "original" work of one individual imagination, copyrighted and hallmarked, and more and more as the imaginative utterance of mankind itself.

[5] *The Tragic Sense in Shakespeare* (Chatto & Windus, 1961).

[6] Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.

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IN CONCLUSION, it is worth remarking that this view of Shakespeare does at least answer an old riddle. Why did Shakespeare attach no importance to the printed edition of his work? Why did he, even in his last years of leisure, take no steps to collect his plays and issue them in a correct text? Eighteenth and 19th-century critics, completely enclosed with a literary tradition, regarded this problem as insoluble. Some of them, in despair, produced a caricature-figure of Shakespeare as a porcine business man, indifferent to the fate of his works once he had collected an income from them, a mere clothed baboon who, by the next logical step, could easily be shown to have been a front man for Bacon or some other noble amateur. The true answer is indicated in the words of David Riesman:

> The book, like the door, is an encouragement to isolation: the reader wants to be alone, away from the noise of others. This is true even of comic books for children, who associate comics with being alone, just as they associate TV with the family, and movies with friends of their own age.... If oral communication keeps people together, print is the isolating medium *par excellence*.[7]

If, as seems likely, the printed book meant nothing to Shakespeare, that is because he instinctively saw it as an "isolating medium"—and he was not interested in any device that isolated the individual. His theme is order and harmony; he writes of those things which move men in unison and union. John Lawlor, whose sane and helpful book I have already quoted, puts this strongly:

> As the greatest punishment is isolation, separate existence, so the greatest good is the holding of the natural bond, especially the gravely tender relation between parent and child. . . . Shakespeare's greatest single gift is an unwearied sense of the natural tie—the utter punishment of separate existence, on the one hand; on the other, the endlessly fruitful possibilities once the human circle holds.

This view, I am sure, is right; it takes account of the optimism of Shakespeare's tragedies, the fact that, after the terrible exhaustion of the struggle, order is always restored. This vision Shakespeare communicated by means of a poetic art that thrusts towards myth. Both poetry and myth involve the auditor in participation. From that participation, the egotisms and ingenuities of middlemen, from critics to producers, from editors to actors, have excluded us for too long. And it is no use retreating, as sensitive people have tended to do, from the theatre to the fireside, relying on the text and one's own imagination. The isolation of the printed page is just as harmful as the mountebanking of the theatre. So that nothing short of a sane theatrical tradition can give us back our Shakespeare: and we must pluck up our courage, at last, and demand that we have one.

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[7] In *Explorations in Communication*, edited McLuhan and Carpenter (Beacon Press, Boston, 1960).

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D. J. Enright

On the Obtained Resignation of a Vice-Chancellor (Singapore 1963)

It has happened before.
It will happen again.
It is an old story.

—Which is no reason
For not retelling it.
Old stories are the sort
That deserve retelling.

Unthinking at a public meeting
Someone clears his sinuses:
Which is, contempt of country
And spitting on the flag.
Engrossed in politics,
We do not notice
How politics engrosses us,
Our more seductive Circe.

Nostalgia for the old ways—
How could we ever feel it!
—The open horrors,
The plainly broken bodies.
Yet it ended in decent tears,
Homecoming for some, and
Memories not all ignoble,
And books, plays, films.
Can only the long cemeteries
Persuade us to love for a while?
Must we fight abroad
To find out where home is?
Can we only wash in others' blood?

Clearly we cannot wash in words.
They stick to the fingers.
Unlike death,
There is no end to their definition.

A government holds itself humane
That only silences and threatens,
That only lies and bans.
— And wouldn't we in fact
(We academics are concerned with fact)
Have this sort of peace, rather,
In our sort of time?

It is an old story.
Perhaps after all
It doesn't warrant retelling.
Least said, soonest mended:
And we have so much in need of mending
It is an old story.
We academics have our saving counsels—
Let it lie, perhaps,
For nine years in your drawer.

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NOTES & TOPICS

On to Mon

OURS IS A WORLD marked not so much by the gift of tongues as by a trial of tongues: of tongues at odds each with each. And it may well be that, in the end, those whose tongues are hard to learn will lose the great world game. On the European stage, French and English—or, to be clear, one should be quick to say the French and English tongues—are now locked in strife. Russian is no real threat; how can Moscow hope to win the world when it has to use such words as *sosushchestvovanniye* (co-existence)? But more than one-fifth of all the race of men are now found in the ranks of those who speak Chinese—a speech made up of one-sound words. And here we may find the clue we need to help us get out in front and win the world to our own English speech.

What is wrong with our speech as of now? When we come to think of it, we all know quite well what is wrong. It is just this: most of the words we use are far too long. We are all too apt to drown the plain sense of our talk in a bog of long grey words—words cloaked by clouds of smoke, furred in froth and fudge. And if we can not make our thought clear when we talk to those who have shared our tongue from birth, then, can we get through to men to whom our speech is a strange thing that has to be learnt from books?

We can not hope to win men to our own way of thought if they think that our speech is too hard for them to learn. That is the long and the short of it. And the first thing to do is to cut one's speech short—which is not the same thing as to cut off one's tongue.

We do not need to go as far as the Chinese have done—that is, to cramp all speech in to a small list of one-sound words which one must speak in more than one tone to make it clear what sense each word is meant to have. For us, the choice is much less cribbed and curbed. Thanks to the way our speech springs from such a lot of roots, we have a wide range of one-sound words from which we can pick and choose. We can take, each in its turn, such short words as:

wet	*big*	*wide*	*bare*	*drink*
damp	*great*	*broad*	*bald*	*drain*
dank	*grand*	*fat*	*peeled*	*quaff*
moist	*large*	*stout*	*stripped*	*swig*

and then share out a wealth of shades of sense that mark each of these words off from each.

We have thus no need to use tones, which are hard to learn. Of course, to make things still more clear, we can, if we wish, spell each word its own way; thus we can tell dew from due, piece from peace, rough from ruff, and so on. Ours is a nice tongue, ours is. Nice in the true old sense of that word.

What, then, does all this lead us to? To this: There is now a strong case for a new bid to make our speech as short as we can—short and terse and brief and plain and blunt and curt and crisp and dry and frank and taut and clear.

SO-CALLED "Basic English" has not got right down to the true base. There is no doubt just where that base is to be found. Let there be one rule—just one: *No more than one sound per word.*

It is urged that, when we come to speak our tongue in this new form, we should call it MON. MON seems quite a good name for a speech made up of one-sound words. ("Mono" has to be ruled out, since it is a two-sound word; there is, too, the point that it is a term in use in the trade of print.)

There is, by the way, a dead tongue called Old Mon. (Though it has been dead so long, it is of course, still taught to some of our young men, while the tongues that are now used in large parts of the world of our own day are not taught, or not much; that is how things are with us.) So, to make it quite clear that the new form of our own speech that is here urged is in no way linked with Old Mon, let us call it, when we need to give its name in full, NEW MON.

The change to NEW MON need not be as hard as some may fear. Is not this the trend of our time? We are on the road to MON when we use such short slang words as *bike* and *pub* and *plane* and *phone* and *wire*, when we talk of *specs* and *discs* and *perks*, of the *Six* or the *Bomb*, of the *Left* and the *Right*, of a *new look* or a *new wave*. We break down "industrial disputes" in to the *go slow*, the *work to rule*, the *wild cat strike*, the *lock out*. The Press is all too fond of such MON words as *probe* and *purge* and *quiz*

ANDREW BOYD'S *last spoof was published in* ENCOUNTER *three years ago ["Dr. Watson's Dupe," March 1960], and revealed a startling secret about the dark habits of Sherlock Holmes; but we heard nothing at all from Baker Street, or the friends of Dr. Watson. Perhaps this time he can break through readers' reticence; we await monosyllabic or polysyllabic communications.*

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and *row* and *crash* and *clash* and *stir* and *call* and *tough* and *soft* and *tests* and *talks* and *pacts* and *rifts* and *moves* and *bids*. All we have to do is give the thing a bit more of a shove on a course long set. No one need quiz what we mean if we say, say, that a PRO had done a real pro job, or that he had made a pub spec of him self.

Are there not in fact quite good MON words for most of the things to which we still tend to give long names? We might come to see such things plain—and this would be good for us—if we threw out the long terms we now use, and faced the blunt fact that, say, "economics" means how to make and share wealth; that "diplomacy" means how to get what you want in the world by skilled use of the nudge, the threat, and the bribe (to wit, to woo); that "politics" is no more than the tale of the ins and the outs ("Opposition," in MON, would be just The Outs; "Government," The Ins), and a "politician" is in truth an in and out man.

SOME OF OUR WORDS can just be carved up. This is not at all hard when you try it. What is wrong with, say, *foot ball* or *foot notes*, *crafts man* and *kins man*? And when all is said and done, why not *pain full* and *care full*? Would it not bring out the full sense of words like *big wig* and *dead lock* if we cut them up like that?

If we cut down some of our long words to MON size, we should thus cut out a lot of cant and fluff. Try it out on a phrase or two culled from the Press of the day:

OLD STYLE	NEW MON
it is impossible to over-emphasise the significance of this development	*this is a big thing*
it is difficult to estimate the exact significance of this development	*what does it mean?*
it would be premature to pass any final judgment on this development	*we don't know yet*
there are certain difficulties about this conception	*there's a catch in this*
one may detect an underlying contradiction between outward form and reality	*it's a fake*
commercial relations	*trade*
public relations	*puff*
widespread, prolonged and intentive precipitation is officially forecast	*it will rain cats and dogs*
representative parliamentary institutions based upon universal adult franchise	*one man, one vote*
proportional representation	*fair do's*
equitable geographical distribution	*fair do's for all lands*
the new weapons system is encountering serious technical difficulties at a late stage in its development, mainly because of its extreme sophistication	*one more big bill will have to be paid for an arms flop*
national independent nuclear deterrent with long range delivery capability	*home made pie in the sky*

If, in this way, we break down our long words, we could bring out the good MON sense that lurks in some of them, lost to sight neath a load of tripe.

Let us blow the dust off those fine old MON words that have too long borne such sad brands as *"obs."* or *"poet."* or *"dial."* Words like *oft* and *yon* and *ilk* and *neath* and *tween* and *naught* (or *nowt*); like *morn* and *eve*, *fore* and *aft*, *e'er* and *ne'er* and *o'er* and *e'en*, and e'en (or eke) *eke*. Let South learn from North not just that "where there's muck there's brass", and "there's nowt so queer as folk", but eke (or e'en) how to use these good MON terms. It would all add to the sum of our ken.

Let us make frank use in print of the words that ring through our homes—*dad* and *mum* and *sis* and *gran*, for a start; and *veg* and *fridge* and *pud* and *hols* and so on; and e'en the pure MON *john* or *loo*. Most of us have long since cut "luncheon" down to lunch; all we need is to do the same thing to more words of this kind. Young folk whose talk is of squares and cool cats, who do a ton or the twist, can help in their own way here. All trades can lend us words for their gear and trim. Let us take from each armed force its pet slang words—*gen* and *prang* and *hard ware* and the like. Some ranks are oft known by short forms such as Brig and Wing Co and Sarge; let us have more of the same. And why not take the same stand in the case of *Rev* and *Ven* and *Prof* and folk of that ilk?

IN THE SPEECH we use each day in real life, it is rare to hear the full names of, *e.g.*, the B.B.C. or the M.C.C. used. (There must by now be few folk who are quite sure how to spell the full names.) Why not take such terms—and G.P.O. and H.M.G. and T.U.C.—in to NEW MON as they stand, and count each as three one-sound words?

There are some more well known terms which we can take in from the world of trade. Each one of us who buys or sells a house must know what *mod. con.*, and *sep. kit.*, and *lab. sav.*, and so on, mean. *Sits. vac.*, too, may be seen in the *ads.* Men who buy and sell stocks and shares can lend us *cum. pref.* and *ex. div.*

A switch to MON may e'en bring some of us divs and cons and savs for which no one had

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looked. Think, to start with, of the cum pref with which a whole sex would come to see that in this new sit they must all, both young and old, be called girls.

The change will help us to link hands once more with our friends and kins men on the yon side of the seas, both in what we shall soon come to know as the Joined States and in *Cwth* lands (see neath). They can chip in with some good Mon words too. Who gave the world the *cop* and the *hot rod* and the *beat*, the *come back* and the *call girl* and the *drug store* and the *hot dog* and the *fail safe*? Who gave it the *swag man* and the *fair cow*?

It should not be hard to put in to Mon all the terms we need in the game of so called "politics": the House, the Lords, the polls, the three line whips, and much else are all Mon now. If we do not much like the sound of Cons and Lab and Lib—and Dem and Rep in the Joined States, and Grit and So Cred and so forth to the north—it will still be poss to find tags that are just as clear. True Blue, and Whig, and, for "Labour," why not Work? For "uni-lateralists", Folk Who Sit Down; for "national coalition", Red, White and Blue; the job is as good as done. The Commonwealth is blessed with the short name of *Cwth* (rhymes with couth). Folk who take pride in their pink skins —it may be that they have naught else to take pride in—can, if they feel they must have a Mon name of their own, be dubbed *non-wogs*.

It may be said that the whole thing will be a sharp break with all that we hold most ven in our old ways of speech and thought. That is just not true. A strong Mon streak runs through our wise old folk saws. Think of a few of them. You will find that they range from: *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*, to: *Youth will be served*, by way of: *Do as I say, not as I do*; *Dog does not bite dog*; *Live and learn*; *Spare the rod and spoil the child*; and: *The best things in life are free.*

Take our best loved bards and play wrights. Are not those words of theirs that come first to mind all Mon or near-Mon—short and sweet? Turn from Chaucer to Chesterton, from Keats to Kipling, from Shakespeare to Burns and the Brownings. What do we at once hear in the mind's ear?

The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne . . .

He was as fresh as is the month of May . . .

For there is good news yet to hear, and fine things to be seen . . .

When I have fears that I may cease to be . . .

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, She stood in tears . . .

And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

As You Like It—All's Well That Ends Well—Twelfth Night, or What You Will—All the world's a stage . . . To be, or not to be . . . Fair is foul, and foul is fair. . . .

A man's a man for a' that . . . The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft a-gley . . . My love is like a red, red rose . . .

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways, I love thee to the depth and breadth and height My soul can reach . . .

The year's at the spring/And day's at the morn . . .

Need it be said that this is no more than a first quick glance at the rich hoard of Mon that the great men of the past have piled up for us? And the bards of our own time have kept it up well. When T. S. Eliot wrote *"Teach us to care and not to care, Teach us to sit still"*, and Dylan Thomas sang

Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain . . .

they showed that, in the age of "The Waste Land" and "Shall Gods Be Said to Thump the Clouds?", Mon in Eng. Lit. is no where near its swan song. As for old man Frost, a Mon type for sure (*"Some say the world will end in fire, Some say in ice . . ."*), he has done as much for the cause as did the great Walt who wrote, of the beasts:

I stand and look at them long and long,
They do not sweat and whine . . .
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick . . .

One must face the fact that to put, say, the Lord's Prayer in to Mon will mean a small but marked change here and there. "Our Dad, which art up There, blest be Thy name. Thy realm come, Thy will be done on earth as it is up There. Give us this day our day's bread, and let us off for our sins. . . ." It may take a while to get used to this sort of thing. (Some of the great texts of our own day, too, must be changed a bit—"Look Back in Rage", "My Fair Dame", "The Kit".) But, God be praised, a whole lot of the words that we who speak English hold dear are Mon in the full sense, and need not be changed by one jot. "Let there be light". "God save the Queen". "The land of the free and the home of the brave". "All the news that's fit to print". "That's Shell ("That was the week) that was". "Go West, young man". "Z cars".

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The hard core of faith and folk lore will be safe; it can stay just the way we know and love it.

Will a switch to MON mean a fresh rift tween us in our isles and our friends on the mainland? Has not our bid to get in to the Joint Mart brought us all the grief and woe we can cope with for now? But NEW MON need not lead to a new *Non*, if we are care full to put it o'er in the right way—that is, with a little *je ne sais quoi* and a lot of *sang froid*. If the French shrug and say *"c'est la vie"* or *"plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose"*, or if they hail our feat as a *tour de force*, they will still be with us in the use of *Mon mots*.

WHAT SHOULD be the first step on the road to our goal? The late George Bernard Shaw has sparked off, through his will, a drive for a new way to spell English. Must we wait for the death of one more famed man of the pen to set off a drive to turn our words in to MON? May be we could start here and now. The mere sight of a piece like this in print—a piece the whole of which is phrased in NEW MON (bar the long words which I cite to show just how long they are; and names)—may rouse some one to come fore and put up funds for which we need not wait till his death. Or might some one at least be moved to give a cash prize for a test to see how well, say, a page from *The Times*—or a few from ENCOUNTER—could be done in to NEW MON?

This would be to make a start in a small way. But why should we not have a go? This is no time for mug wumps to sit on the fence till the iron gets in to their souls. Let us push on, mind full that in place of perspiration, lachrymation, and the like, we must look for naught but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. It will at least be good for our souls to aim to be plain in our choice of words; Sir Ernest Gowers, for one, ought to be glad to see it. And we should eke bear in mind that there is a world to be won—or lost.

Andrew Boyd

Must We Burn Vatsyayana?

By Francis Watson

THAT PORNOGRAPHY should make strange bedfellows will not be thought implausible. Advance information of the first general publication in this country of Vatsyayana's *Kama Sutra*[1] produced all kinds of promiscuity in suggested reading-lists for the Public Prosecutor. And perhaps it was indeed a faint smell of the faggot which caused both Mr. W. G. Archer and Sardar Panikkar, in introducing this edition, to defend their ancient author against any comparison with the Marquis de Sade. There may be an excess of fantasy in the *Kama Sutra*'s love-language of bites, blows, and scratches. But the author of *Justine* would obviously be about as welcome in that chamber as at a Japanese tea-ceremony. Nevertheless, we have to reckon with the fact that the aphorisms of Vatsyayana had been vaguely regarded as the oriental extreme of the impermissible, with the works of de Sade at the occidental extreme. And for both, if it came to it, the defence-brief would probably sound philosophical. "The most characteristic thing," remarked Simone de Beauvoir in *Faut-il Brûler de Sade?*, "is an effort of will that seeks to give full rein to the desires of the flesh without ever being lost in them."

Heady stuff! And therefore, without wanting anything burned, one must be quit of this particular analogy with the simplest of distinctions, between a principle of transgression on the one hand and of integration and rational conformity on the other.

It can be argued that the *Kama Sutra* is not, in fact, a book for every reader. Vatsyayana himself, in or before the 4th century A.D., had to consider objections as to its suitability for young ladies, who were in general not encouraged to study the sciences. But he overcame them with the sensible observation that he was expounding the principles of the one science with which they were already familiar in a practical sense, much as a *mahout* may ride an elephant without having read a manual on the subject. We are not likely at this stage to hear his submission tested at the Old Bailey. But the twilit existence of the *Kama Sutra* remains an essential part of its history. My own copy of Burton's limited edition was picked

[1] *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana.* Translated by SIR RICHARD BURTON and F. F. ARBUTHNOT. Edited with a preface by W. G. ARCHER. Introduction by K. M. PANIKKAR. Allen & Unwin, 42s.

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many years ago from the "Curiosa" section of an antiquarian bookseller's catalogue. And Mr. Archer properly devotes the first part of his introduction to an account of its conspiratorial birth, in which he gives the modest and likeable Arbuthnot a credit that was surely his due.

FOR BURTON HIMSELF the arcane had its own attractions. But neither he nor Arbuthnot, who seriously wanted to improve Victorian loving-standards, can be blamed for the circumspection of their operations (the prosecution of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant in 1877 for the pious eugenics of the Knowlton pamphlet was, after all, relatively recent). Had the *Kama Sutra* been a translation out of Latin or Greek, one can perhaps imagine it joining without too much fuss the Bohn translations with which Juvenal and Martial had been brought within reach of the unclassical. But Sanskrit was different. This was to raise the lid of that steaming cauldron of oriental license on which Burton, when a young officer in the newly annexed province of Sind, had reported in such enthusiastic detail as to endanger his career. It was pure coincidence, no doubt, that the summer of the Indian Mutiny (of which Burton had picked up the standard underground forewarnings) had found British legislators preoccupied with Augean stables at home, thrown open to debate by the Matrimonial Causes Bill, and by Lord Campbell's measure to restrict and penalise obscene publications. But it was not pure coincidence that Ruskin's lecture-audiences in the Mutiny period should have been told:

> The art of India indicates that the people who practise it . . . have got nothing to read, nothing to dwell upon, but that imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, of which we are told that it is only evil continually.

The infectious disorders of the critical faculty have always to be taken into account.

However, Lucknow was relieved. The Obscene Publications Act reached the statute-book. The ship of state sailed majestically into the surface-calm of repression, with Burton blowing at intervals on the horizon and then submerging again. It was thus that the *Kama Sutra,* virtually a discovery of Arbuthnot's, made its first discreet excursions among English bibliophiles. It soon found its way in France in the Isidore Liseux adaptation of the English text. And this, as it happens, has recently made a handsome reappearance (2,500 copies, quickly exhausted) under the auspices of the *Cercle du Livre Précieux*. That the English version should also have been pirated in India, among other *Kama Shastra* compilations and often lamentably, seems to invite some explanation.

IN THE OFFICIAL British impact on India there was a fascinating polarity between the impulse to control and the reluctance to convert. When it was broken there was mutiny. Its subsequent restoration is eloquent in the attitude to obscene publications informing the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) and its amendments, which specifically exempted from prosecution material "kept or used for *bona fide* religious purposes." The exception was not to apply in cases of sale, hire, exhibition, etc. to minors, or of obscene acts, songs, etc. in public "to the annoyance of others." But its significance remains, even if non-legal minds must still face the question of whether by association with religion sex becomes less or more deplorable.

Nor is this attitude a *damnosa hereditas* which an independent India has hastened to discard. In the Code as amended up to 1960 these clauses remain unchanged; and it is presumably in the generous shade of religion, nowhere ampler than in India, that the civilisation of the age of Vatsyayana has been allowed to communicate with ours. At the same time something in the nakedness of the English language—or in the consumer-research of the bazaar into those who use it—has promoted that strange variety of crypto-clandestine versions of the *Kama Sutra* and its successors to which even to-day's travel-writers often feel bound to refer. In Bombay a new English translation by Dr. S. C. Upadhyaya[2] has now been published in a massive format, with much ancillary matter and reproductions from Indian art. The formality of a circulation limited to the serious-minded is still attached to this *Kama Sutra*. But Bombay may read it. What Bombay may not read, it has been decided there, is *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

The only point is in the paradox. It would not be very difficult to suggest (it did not prove so in court) that *Lady Chatterley,* one way or another, is a religious work. It would be even easier to argue that the *Kama Sutra* is not. Apart from the brief prefatory matter, one of the most striking characteristics of the work is what we should call its secularity. In a book that dwells in detail on everyday life, its pursuits and decorations and relationships, the temple appears very rarely and then in the background, as a place of assignation, or for a musical outing on a holiday, or as an object for the benefactions of a wealthy courtesan. The *lingam* and the *yoni,* which we had been induced with some effort to regard as symbolic abstractions, here resume their homely functions, and their

[2] *Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana,* translated by S. C. UPADHYAYA. Taraporevala, Bombay. Charles Skilton, London, £6 15s.

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vital statistics, as human perquisites. We appreciate that both before and after Vatsyayana the ecstatic union of man and woman could prefigure a relationship with the divine. That the author of the *Kama Sutra* knew all about this is not in doubt, but for the most part he avoided saying so. The contrast in this respect between his treatise and the great Vaishnavite poetic tradition is outstanding: the more so since Vatsyayana's influence on this later literature, notably on Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* and the Bengali lyrics of Chandidas, is emphasised in the essay on the *Kama Sutra* which the late Dr. Panikkar contributed to Mr. Archer's edition.

CLEARLY the most important key to this worldliness of tone is to be found in the systematisation of the Hindu view of life, within which the limits of Vatsyayana's purpose are perfectly understood.

He is dealing with one of the three aspects of activity which, if harmoniously realised, lead to the ultimate goal of liberation (*Mokṣha,* sometimes considered as a fourth aim). The first two—*Dharma* (religion or right conduct) and *Artha* (material affairs)—had been fully and authoritatively expounded by other hands. With these it is essential to integrate the third, *Kama,* which appears in the Burton translation as the experience of the senses, "assisted by the mind together with the soul." This also had been investigated by predecessors, whom Vatsyayana freely names and quotes in reducing the accumulated thought on the subject to a summary made definitive by his own conclusions. The relative isolation in which he can treat his theme depends upon its accepted interrelation with the other components of a satisfactorily ordered existence. The pattern holds together by the general provision that, in cases where one consideration appears to clash with another, *Dharma* is to be preferred to *Artha* and *Artha* to *Kama*. Vatsyayana has only to remind his readers from time to time of these priorities, and the field is his. It is a concern with functional fitness, not a conscious irony as of Swift's *Instructions to Servants,* that can produce this:

> The duty of a courtesan consists in forming connections with suitable men after due and full consideration, and attaching the person with whom she is united to herself; in obtaining wealth from the person who is attached to her, and then dismissing him after she has taken away all his possessions.

It is hardly necessary to add that the intended victim's duty is to avoid becoming one.

Courtesans, in point of fact, provide one of the occupational exceptions to the basic scale of priorities (kings provide another, their main concern being with *Artha* as the sole means of procuring "the livelihood of men"). Other modifications can arise from the well-known Hindu division of life into stages, to each of which one of the three cardinal preoccupations is appropriate. And it seems to me that it is in the handling of these and many other variables that something individual in Vatsyayana makes itself felt. If the *Kama Sutra* is essentially a didactic work, as Sardar Panikkar insists, then it is an astonishingly liberal one. Disapproval of this or that practice can doubtless be quoted to support one's own aversions: prohibition almost never. The book itself should never in the author's view be slavishly or thoughtlessly followed. It provides a repertory of possibilities. At the same time it educates the reader in all the factors that should govern a sensible choice among them for particular cases. A traditional dogma, if it is cited at all, is the least of these factors. And when the science has been thoroughly mastered, in its avowedly frivolous as well as its serious aspects, there will yet come, and should come, the moment when the book falls to the floor.

"When the wheel of love is once set in motion, there is then no Shastra and no order."

THE HUMANISM of the *Kama Sutra* is apparent. To what extent it mirrors the actual existence of a materially successful, socially enlightened, and psychologically guilt-free society is an open question. Since it is an upper-class picture, the air will be sniffed for decadence. Perhaps it is partly because the witness is for once not that of a satirist that decadence is so difficult to substantiate. It is also a picture of secular sophistication. But the roughly contemporary supporting evidence for this luxurious way of life does not come, as far as I know, from monkish criticism. It is found in the very structures of monasticism, in carved stupas and painted caves. It is as if the tolerance of a brilliantly decorative cultivation of the phenomenal world were the price that Buddhism had at length to pay for the support of kings. The thoughtful avoidance of excess is, of course, advocated in the *Kama Sutra*. It may be accounted a product of the Middle Way. But it will hardly be denied that we have come quite a distance from the Fire-Sermon.

A WESTERN SYNDROME OF REACTION may at least be easier to document. Its visual associations, it seems, are not with the 4th-century Amaravati sculptures which have stared at us for 70 years in the British Museum, but with erotic themes carved many centures later at sites significantly, but inaccurately, described as

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secluded. This does give opportunities for reproducing, as in Dr. Upadhyaya's edition, a selection of beautiful *mithuna* effigies. But the suggestion of a mediaeval temple as a sort of illustrated edition of the *Kama Sutra* for the instruction of the illiterate does violence to more than mere chronology. It introduces into the philosopher's urbane discourse the metaphysical resonances which he so patently avoided. And on the other hand it offers the spectator of a masterpiece of many hands, chiselled frieze by frieze into a great orchestration, the distraction of a catalogue of subject-matter which is arbitrary, not always relevant and usually inexact. As a simple instance, the fact that most of the coupled figures, however variously engaged, are standing, has nothing to do with the bases of Vatsyayana's recommendations and everything to do with the sculptor's problem. (For reflections on the aesthetics of arrested action see Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn.*)

But there is something of a parallel—if we are considering reactions—between the freedom of the press now conferred on Vatsyayana and the comparatively recent development as tourist attractions of some of the monuments of the last great age of temple-building. The most famous among these, the unique sun-temple at Konarak and the extensive group at Khajurao, are some 800 miles apart, different in date, history and style, yet by force of obsession linked no less firmly than Ajanta and Ellora, Pompeii and Herculaneum, Sodom and Gomorrah, or Bath and Wells. In guides and reports of the past, the word "obscene" was often used in reference to these temples in a descriptive and not specially pejorative sense. Sometimes, it is true, a commentator added the word "unfortunately." But the erotic element, little suited as it was to public discussion, seldom affected an appraisal. To-day we can see little else. A travel-book about India is hardly marketable unless its author has stood at Khajurao or Konarak, or both, boldly demanding "Why?" and himself supplying some pretty wild answers. *We ask and ask. Thou smilest and art still.* I like to fancy that one day one of the female musicians on the roof-courses of Konarak, goaded out of her stone serenity, will shout back "Why not?"

Proliferation stands out as a disturbing factor (there are individual *mithuna* carvings from very much earlier sites). Words like "orgy" and "saturnalia" take on emotive power in a society which has discarded the deliberate techniques of release. And accordingly the word "tantric" becomes stretched into something vaguely generic ("tantric temples"), and at the same time stripped of all its associations except that of group-indulgence in forbidden sensualities. If this has provoked dubitable comments on temple-sculpture, it is still less appropriate to the pre-tantric world of the *Kama Sutra* into which it has been allowed to seep. Games for three or more players have their place in Vatsyayana's compendium, as more or less customary in different regions, or as suited to particular circumstances (as when, for example, "the women of the king's harem . . . accidentally get hold of a man.") But the scene that is central to the *Kama Sutra* takes place in that room of which we already know the furnishings, the flowers and the perfumes, where the citizen and his partner enact the charmingly graded preliminaries of refreshment, conversation ranging from the pedantic to the suggestive, music and singing ("with or without gesticulations") and all the rest of it. It seems perfectly illustrated, if we want illustrations, in the royal wall-painting of the drinking lovers in Cave 1 at Ajanta, and again in Cave 17, and yet again at Bagh. And for the epilogue, with no *omne animal triste* about it, the miniatures of a thousand years later preserve the deeply-planted convention:

> The lovers may also sit on the terrace of the house, and enjoy the moonlight, and carry on an agreeable conversation. At this time, too, while the woman lies in his lap, with her face towards the moon, the citizen should show her the different planets, the morning star, the polar star, and the Seven Rishis, or Great Bear.
>
> This is the end of sexual union.

BUT THIS isn't what has given Hindu erotics their peculiar reputation. It's those positions, associated with yogic exercises as something that only the supple Indian physique could really master, and the "hotbed of Indian imagination" conceive. The *frisson,* whether of excitement or alarm, is in the first place for the idea of variety. And numerology works its additional magic—the modest *Dodecatechnon* of the Greeks, increased to a mystic 32 by Aretino, though the credit should perhaps have gone to Raimondi's engravings. The *Kama Sutra,* so ran the awestruck imputation, had double that score. And by a purely academic industry it was raised to 90 in the sexological researches of Forberg (who lived from 1770 to 1848).

At the risk of diminishing the professor's triumph it has to be made clear that Vatsyayana was never really in the competition. He believed that the title "Sixty-four" had become attached to this section of his subject by accident, partly by confusion with the "Sixty-Four Arts"—the items of a liberal education required for his ideal citizen, from music and painting through

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hydraulic engineering to parlour-games and riddles. It was the principle that mattered. "If variety is sought in all the arts and amusements, such as archery and others, how much more should it be sought after in the present case." As a tool of argument on any subject, and a useful mnemonic, enumeration is inseparably associated with oriental exposition, whether of the thousand-and-eight names of God or the five principles of peaceful coexistence. The systematising addiction is indeed perfectly demonstrated in Dr. Upadhyaya's learned editorship, with its 28 appendices, comparative tables and analytical studies of Hindu erotics generally—which incidentally provide us with a total calculation of 729 sexual permutations.

This is magnificent, but it is not Vatsyayana. Unlike certain of his predecessors, he was content to say that the different conjunctions are innumerable when "dimensions, force of passion and time" are also taken into account. It was for men and women themselves to multiply and invent mutual pleasures when once the governing factors had been understood: as, for example, that enjoyment is of the same kind in male and female, despite "the difference in the consciousness of pleasure, for a man thinks 'this woman is united with me,' and a woman thinks 'I am united with this man.'"

NUMEROLOGY APART, however, there is some evidence of staying-power in the sumptuary ordinances on sex: or so the readers of ENCOUNTER might have thought, when the Warden of All Souls reported in 1962 the results of his examination of *Lady Chatterley*. The epicentre of that disturbance, it is true, was traced to a region which the *Kama Sutra* mentions only briefly, and one which might defeat positive identification in temple-sculpture. But even connoisseurs such as Sacheverell Sitwell (*The Red Chapels of Banti Serai*) and Hermann Goetz (*India* in the *Art of the World* series) seem, by their vocabulary, to be ill at ease. The erotic, one might conclude, is all very well, but somebody has gone extravagantly far. Just as a line must be drawn, so there are gradations of the obscene. The compilers of that rather impressive recent pamphlet *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* pointed out that "the Victorian legislature was so sure that indecency meant sexual behaviour that it was induced to prohibit 'gross indecency' as such, without troubling to define it. Apologising for any apparent frivolity they added: 'Lord Curzon thought eating soup before lunch grossly indecent'...."

This was not Lord Curzon's only title to the respect of posterity. His zeal for the protection of Indian monuments was outstanding. And it provided among other things a Curzon museum at Konarak, a hut which housed (or used to house) some of the carvings that time has separated from the structure. Things may have changed since the satisfaction of my own first day at the site left room for one minor astonishment. But then it seemed worth copying down some of the labels for the rescued fragments, which ranged from "Embrace" through "Obscenity" to "Gross Obscenity." Subsequent cross-reference confirms the latter category as one recognised, if not by the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert, at least by the English Courts: as, for example, in evidence of the arrest and prosecution of ninety couples in one locality over a period of months, given before the Queen's Bench early in 1961.[3]

This is a jungle Vatsyayana never knew, though between the small, prosperous cities where we are to suppose his teaching practised there must have been forest and wilderness, wild beasts and sometimes barbarous men. Yet in the written art, where a general tabu against the pleasure-principle may be unproductive, particular tabus have done their service to allegory and circumlocution. Hector is remembered for the attitude assumed by the diminutive Andromache, Atalanta for the posture in which Parrhasius painted her with Meleager, and even the far from reticent de Nerciat is happy to contrive allusions to silent flutes and the like. If the *Kama Sutra*, as its advance reputation might have suggested, had substituted a system of love by numbers we should have been worse off, not better. The allusiveness of Sanskrit may not always be communicable, but at all events the translators can preserve the writhing creeper, the broken cloud, the line of jewels, the wife of Indra; and those persistent zoological images, some of them comical but all of them expressive, which reflect an erotic kinship with the natural world. It seems significantly necessary to add that I don't mean bestiality.

AT LEAST some of the powerful literary influence claimed for the *Kama Sutra* by Mr. Archer and Sardar Panikkar rests on the subtle work of interpreters, pouncing upon such poetic clues as the traces of red powder left on the couch by the soles of Parvati's feet, or the vibrations of Radha's remaining adornments. From the facts contained in the treatise as a whole, to quote the Burton-Arbuthnot "Concluding Remarks"—"how many novels could be written!" If this were all, it would provoke an analogy with those adjustable

[3] The law was, of course, concerned with the *public* commission (*i.e.*, at night in closed cars in a cul-de-sac) of an act describable *per se* as of "a lewd, obscene, and disgusting nature."

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American charts for supplying under-inspired authors with a choice of plot and incident unfolding from the initial encounter of boy and girl. But clearly it is not all. And Mr. Archer's particular concern is with the revival of the *Kama Sutra* by translation, and its contribution to a modern appreciation of the character of Indian culture.

One might have concluded that this aspect of things had emerged from the first Western studies of Sanskrit. "It is remarkable," wrote Sir William Jones, "to what a degree their works of imagination are pervaded by the idea of sexuality." But it is also remarkable (as Mr. Archer points out) to what a degree Jones succeeded in toning down or falsifying the idea in his own translations, setting a pattern which was afterwards followed in popular Western versions of the great epics. Nor can one ignore the effect of those different researches of the Abbé Dubois, plodding along Tamilnad in Indian dress while the orientalists sat with their pandits in Calcutta. Jones civilly insisted that the "singularity" pervading the literature of the Hindus was 'no proof of the depravity of their morals." But the good Abbé Dubois, though sometimes surprised by the evidence of Indian propriety, found the scales overloaded against it. It was "as if most of the religious and civil institutions of India were only invented for the purpose of awakening and exciting passions towards which they have already such a strong natural tendency." He does not name the literature of *Kama*, but he had tracked it to South Indian homes: "abominable books" systematically describing "the most filthy and disgusting forms of debauchery," as well as "the art of giving variety to sensual pleasures" and "the decoction of beverages calculated to excite the passions." In the classical Mediterranean world Indian aphrodisiacs had been proverbial and valuable. In the Greek Anthology the potent charm of variation was personified in an Eastern girl. But the story that ended last year in a general English edition of the *Kama Sutra* surely begins with the censorious curiosity of the Abbé Dubois.

To summarise some effects of his famous 18th-century work, there was first its value to the Company's Administration, which accepted for its servants the possibly startling opportunity of "conducting themselves more in unison with the customs and prejudices of the natives." Secondly, it remained a standard authority on those customs and prejudices, and a source for quotations on their irremediable corruption. Thirdly, his field-work convinced the author himself that prospects of converting any but outcaste Hindus were chimerical. Fourthly, this in turn produced a reaction in the emergent movement of Anglican evangelism, already chafing under the official resistance to missions. It was Bishop Heber who denounced from a Calcutta pulpit the "blasphemy" of Dubois in allegedly consigning to collective damnation a "great, civilised nation of 100 millions . . . whom to know is to love." By the same token Heber was led, if not exactly to defend "the idolatry which surrounds us," at least to make the significant concession that it was no worse or more formidable than "those beautiful phantoms and horrid sorceries which lurked beneath the laurels of Delos and Daphne, and floated on the clouds of Olympus."

THE PATTERN is endlessly recurrent. It is essential to the complex record of the Western encounter with Indian culture that no denigration ever went unanswered and every shout of admiring discovery brought a fresh avowal of the need to "restore the balanced view." The factor of political relationship between Britain and India is too obvious to dwell upon, except to notice that the argument never showed any signs of being stifled under an official line. But underneath it all, and much more difficult to chart even superficially, is the ebb and flow of the feelings that took terrifying shape in De Quincey's dreams when he had bought his opium from a brown-skinned, sinister visitant of the Lakeland scene. Antiquity, multiplicity, mystery, fecundity, and cruelty combined to produce his memorable nightmare. And it was a nightmare unrelieved by erotic attraction.

This is the curiously missing element in the Indian stimulation of the English imagination. The gap cannot be said to have been filled by *Lalla Rookh* and the *Indian Love-Lyrics*, nor yet by a reminder that John Cleland had lived in India. I have no knowledge of what Lord Campbell's Act was able to flush out of Holywell Street, nor of what was burned (by accident) in the Houghton Library. But C. R. Ashbee, who applied himself to such matters, admitted to his index almost nothing of Indian inspiration except the productions of Captain Edward Sellon, who shot himself in a Piccadilly Hotel in 1866. For the fact is—and Sir Richard Burton is a conspicuous witness to it—that our arrows of desire had a way of falling short in or about the Fertile Crescent. Conceptions of oriental sensuality, whether crude or subtle, retained their dominant association with the Near East. India never ceased to captivate her invaders, but it was by a seduction from which the capital ingredients of erotic sympathy seemed to have been drained. Whether this was by a Western or an Indian act of withdrawal, or by both, the deterrent preserved its credibility. In which circumstances, should sex nevertheless

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rear its head, it could be expected to be an ugly one. The opening chapter of a book called *Stark India*, respectably published in 1930, was cosily titled "Sex-Mad Millions."

OF COURSE THE GREAT DIALOGUE was not mainly, or even frequently, on that level. But De Quincey's spectres must have their due, and the real shiver is in the word "millions." Had fecundity been left to demographers and economists it would still have been a subject of concern, though in that case it might have been more frequently noticed that European populations had expanded at a faster rate than Asians, and on a much smaller territory. But as an emotive concept it could be associated with a catalogue of which every shocking item—female infanticide, widow-seclusion and *sati*, the rape of prenubile wives, a legend of masturbation producing early impotence, debilitating drugs and nameless unnatural practices—might have been thought to impede the terrible fruitfulness rather than to promote it. Norman Douglas could answer Miss Mayo's *Mother India* without leaving Capri, but only with the old masochistic riposte of *How About Europe?* The diabolism of cruelty invited a similar exorcision, and for many-limbed "monstrosities" there was always the iconography of the Apocalypse. It was exhilarating for the rationalisers, but the devils still lurked about the swept chamber.

And the last of them was mystery, no less loved than feared. India has a right to her privacies, but there is also a Secret India which is an occidental empire, and perhaps the last to be relinquished, since the esoteric is as much a vested interest of the travelogue as of the drawing-room cult. Only a compulsive craving for penetralia could have obscured the fact that sex is on the outside of the temple, carved to meet the blazing procession of the days, and that the dark inmost shine is empty. And only a negative tradition in erotic communication could have required that the most distinguished English novel about India should have been painstakingly constructed around something nasty that didn't happen in a cave.

THE *Kama Sutra* shakes us free of one incubus after another. Here fecundity is neither a problem nor a horror—hardly, in fact, a consideration. Vicious cruelty is off the agenda for consenting adults, and even the taking of advantage is made to seem conspicuously nonviolent (it is "simply by asking them" that "the superintendents of cow-pens enjoy the women in the cow-pens"). The connoisseur of self-mutilation will find one of two rather excruciating examples, but these appear to be the gallant gestures of men for the good of women in exceptional situations; and they are included in a wide-ranging survey of compensations, stimulants, emergency substitutes and appliances which notably stops short of that far from creditable Western invention, the girdle of chastity. As for the multiple aberrations of idolatry, we might be in a conventicle for all the evidence we shall find.

But a mystery remains, and it is the mystery of the work's historical significance. It was probably right for Mr. Archer to re-issue the translation as it stood, without rearrangement, numbering of the *sutra*, new footnotes or corrections. Dr. Upadhyaya extends the text somewhat, interpolates, offers abundant references, sometimes clearing up the text but in at least one case distorting it by choice of word. He corrects Burton's unfortune confusion over the "scissors" and "wedge" *mudra*. But he repeats his surely doubtful interpretation of the "third *prakriti*" as "eunuchs." He has a great deal to say about tumescence and detumescence in early Sanskrit literature, but disappointingly little about Vatsyayana.

It may be retorted that there is nothing to be said. The *Kama Sutra* was composed "between the first and fourth centuries A.D." by someone called Mallanaga of the sub-clan Vatsyayana. And there we are. But after all, a range of dates even wider has been offered for the great and shadowy Kalidasa, on whom Vatsyayana's influence is certain and considerable. And the devoted study of Kalidasa's dramas has now virtually fixed them at the peak of the Gupta "Golden Age"—the first half of the fifth century. A groping English reader, his interest aroused by Vatsyayana's vision of a calm, leisure-cultivating, and harmonious society, will want to relate it as closely as may be feasible to the same, better visualised, epoch. And about the fading of that vision he will want much more than the simple statement of Sardar Panikkar that "of the rigidity which came to be a feature of Indian society at a later time, there is no evidence in the *Kama Sutra*." There is already *some* evidence of it, one may suggest, in Kalidasa. What had begun to happen between the two, and before the White Huns swept in? How are we to relate Vatsyayana to the interaction, social as well as speculative, of a Buddhism about to decline and a Brahmanism about to revive?

The goblin of Indian antiquity—a much taller antiquity now than that which appalled De Quincey—may still be at work. The line of continuity is astonishing, but it is not necessarily straight or uninterrupted. To point to the Indus Valley civilisation, in this instance, is a little like telling someone who wants to get St.

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Augustine fixed in his mind that Knossos was remarkable. Indian Sanskrit studies and Indian archæology, adding to a great Western heritage, have in fact been paying recent attention to the obscure period that we need to understand; and Mr. Archer's pioneering project may stimulate more researches. It must do so, if we are urged to regard the *Kama Sutra* as "important."

If not, it will be better to be content with the fun to be had from it, of which there is a great deal; to persuade ourselves that something of the sage himself lurks in the charm of the translation; to be grateful that, after whole forests have been felled to publicise a modern rediscovery of the female orgasm, we can have the matter settled in a classical dissertation of six pages; to memorise our favourite aphorisms and to look forward to their appearance next Christmas in the pocket anthologies, beside Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne, and Will Rogers.

On African Socialism

Africans have few champions less critical than Mr. Fenner Brockway. Because he is himself a dedicated socialist, and sees in socialism all things good in political life, he has discovered that most Africans are excellent socialists too. "Indeed, it is not too much to say," he claims in his new book *On African Socialism* (The Bodley Head, 12s. 6d.) "that the most dynamic socialist movement in the world to-day is in Africa."

This is a claim to make us European socialists, who have struggled so hard and so long to create dynamic socialist movements in our own sophisticated countries, hang our heads in shame. We have no "socialist Britain," yet there is already a "socialist Ghana." But what does Mr. Brockway mean by socialism? The word is cloaked in ambiguity.

> Young Africans have told me that students in Moscow tend to become anti-communist because they dislike the doctrinal rigidity of their studies, while students who come to Britain tend to become pro-communist because of their experience of colour feeling among our population. The total effect, whatever the location, has been to direct them towards *some form of socialism* [my italics].

If you are pro-communist or anti-communist it is all the same; you turn to "some form of socialism."

I need not waste time in these pages defining the differences between communism (the totalitarian creed described by communists as "socialism") and democratic socialism, whose adherents often use the same single word for their beliefs. In ideals and in methods the two systems profoundly differ—the gulf between them is no less than the chasm which separates a monolithic from a pluralist society. Their devotees are sworn enemies; and it is one of the tragedies of modern political thought that it has been bedevilled by this confusion over a word. Mr. Brockway does nothing at all to clarify this confusion. True, there are no communist states in Africa, but there are many very authoritarian ones, and these are all described, with engaging simplicity, as "socialist."

By what stretch of the imagination is such a varied African brood all called "socialist"? Greatly as authoritarian socialism may differ from democratic in political form, they are both given to certain similar economic techniques—public ownership (to more or less degree) and planning. For the African states, these techniques have great attractions at the present time. They are poor countries desperately anxious for economic advancement, and for this they need, above all, heavy capital investment. But there is no moneyed class with the resources to provide investment privately, and private foreign investors are hesitant. Although most African governments would, officially, welcome them, the passions of the imperialist past are still too recent, there are still too many uncertainties about the future, to allow them to invest with confidence. So capital must be provided through the government, whether raised through local taxation, or through loans or grants from abroad. For any large-scale works there is no alternative to public enterprise (as was indeed the case even in colonial days). "Nationalisation" is not, as in advanced countries, the outcome of socialist ideology which revolted against the social consequences of private profit and the "capitalist system": it is the only way of securing speedy economic advance.

The same is the case with planning. With "development" as the prime objective, and with governments striving to raise capital for particular projects, the possibility of a *laissez-faire* economy simply does not exist. Indeed there is scarcely a country left in the world which does

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not now "plan" to some extent or other, irrespective of political creed; the less advanced it is, the more urgently it desires to make economic progress, the more essential it is for it to plan. Whether the planning can be called "socialist" must depend on the type of society it proposes to build.

Here comes the rub. For Brockway the two leading African "socialists" are the two Presidents N— Nasser and Nkrumah. But what is Nkrumah doing? Can one doubt any longer that he is building a police state, with all the characteristics of totalitarianism? True, there may be trade unions and co-operatives and communal enterprise (unquestionably characteristics of socialism for Mr. Brockway). But if these are all *gleichgeschaltet* into limbs of the state or of the one all-embracing ruling party, they may also be features of fascist or communist régimes, entirely different in origin, purpose, and function from the same institutions in free socialist countries.

Not only are *independent, voluntary* organisations of this kind getting short shrift in Ghana to-day (and not only in Ghana), but the essential institutions of democracy are, one by one, disappearing. The latest instance was the demise of an independent judiciary when the Chief Justice was dismissed for acquitting men whom Nkrumah thought should not be acquitted. That means not only the end of any effective political opposition—for some time there has been none of that—but also the end of the rule of law. Nasser certainly has achievements to his credit; but he, Brockway admits, "is not prepared to accept the verdict of 'illiterate peasantry' in free elections"; he "ignores" the National Assembly and political prisoners languish in Egyptian jails. This is not "formal democracy," we are told, but Nasser is nevertheless "endeavouring to inspire the new constitution with a democratic dynamism." And we may console ourselves with the hope that this kind of thing "will prove a passing phase"; that the "present style of authoritarian rule will be temporary and will be followed by liberty and tolerant democracy." One day, when they themselves decide that the need for tyranny has passed, the men who have become tyrants will become good democrats. What touching faith!

THE REAL TROUBLE in African thought to-day is that it is in many places caught up in a massive process of self-deception, blindly encouraged by men like Fenner Brockway. African leaders tell

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themselves that there is a special brand of "African democracy" which can dispense with the checks on power which the older democracies have found essential to curb the waywardness of incipient dictators. Somehow African rulers will prove wise and benevolent, even without oppositions and legal checks and balances. Somehow personal liberties will be maintained, even though independent organisations are not permitted. And in Africa a special "African socialism" will be established which is neither democratic socialism nor communism; it is "a natural expanding development of the traditional tribal system of Africa" which gives Africans an "inbred kinship with socialism." Africans, Julius Nyerere has written, have no more need to be "converted to socialism" than they have to be "taught" democracy. "Both are rooted in the past which produced us." And just as they can have their democracy without checks and balances, so they can have their socialism without class conflict.

But what a world separates the "democracy" and "socialism" of the primitive tribe from the politics of the modern state! The Athenians, let us not forget, had their primitive democracy too, but what has that to do with the modern history of Greece? As the new states are built, as a new unity is imposed on conflicting tribes, and as a new division of wealth follows on the economic development they all desire, the same stresses and strains will appear in these societies as exist everywhere else. The autocrats which fashion the new unity will become untameable unless there are inbuilt checks on their power, just as the new rich men and economic corporations, not to mention the new bureaucrats, will cling to their wealth and power until the underdogs revolt against them. There is no colour bar when it comes to human greed and ambition; these vices can only be controlled by social institutions. It is crass self-deception to imagine that Africa can by-pass the struggles and miseries which other continents have suffered, that they will enter the kingdoms of democracy and socialism by instinct, as it were.

I cannot believe that Africans are helped by friends who encourage them in these illusions. It needs no inspired prophet to foretell the day when the seeds of rebellion against their own political and economic tyrannies begin to sprout there too. Trade union leaders will seek to defend elementary working-men's rights; editors and journalists will want a free press to discuss openly and critically a number of life-and-death national issues; the whole of the community will cry out for a variety of civil liberties. Where will the Fenner Brockways of this world stand then?

Rita Hinden

The Walled Garden

All is lulled now in the long walled garden
By certainty that heat has stilled the day;
Bee-coloured lichen, warm already, flakes
Beneath the lines of string on south-aged brick,
While peaches face towards a heavy sun,
Until, like shavings, moths come down the dusk.
And if you then are leaning on a sill,
To look at flowers that have not moved, but change,
Their growing whiteness will not find you cool.

Diana Witherby

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The Anti-Intellectuals

By David Marquand

AT THE SEAT *of government his abstract, inapplicable, metaphysico-politics are either nugatory or noxious. Besides, his principles relish so strongly of Paris and are seasoned with such a profusion of French garlic, that he offends the whole nation. Better for Americans that on their extended plains "thistles should grow, instead of wheat, and cockles, instead of barley," than that a philosopher should influence the councils of the nation.*—FROM A FEDERALIST PAMPHLET ATTACKING THOMAS JEFFERSON.

We shall some day accept the thought that it is just as illogical to assume that every boy must be able to read as it is that each one must be able to perform on the violin, that it is no more reasonable to require that each girl shall spell well than it is that each one shall bake a good cherry pie.—FROM AN ADDRESS BY THE PRINCIPAL OF A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, 1951.

When the word of God says one thing and scholarship says another, scholarship can go to hell!—BILLY SUNDAY.

MORE OBVIOUSLY than any other country in the world, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union, the United States is the creation of intellectuals. It would, of course, be naïve to imagine that the entire population of colonial New England consisted of learned divines pondering the finer points of theology, or that the American Revolution was caused solely by political theorists intoxicated by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. Greed, as well as godliness, helped to settle Massachusetts Bay. The shot heard round the world was triggered as much by a mercenary reluctance to contribute towards the costs of Empire as by a devotion to the teachings of John Locke. But when all possible qualifications have been made, the fact remains that the Pilgrim Fathers and the Founding Fathers alike risked their lives for a set of intellectual propositions, and that among them intellectuals had an astonishingly high place. According to Professor Hofstadter,[1] there was one university graduate to every forty or fifty families in the first generation of American puritans. Harvard was a going concern, whose degrees were accepted by Oxford and Cambridge, only a few years after the first colonists landed at Plymouth Rock. In Puritan New England, in fact, the intelligentsia was as close to being a ruling class as in any other society in history. Intellectuals were almost as prominent among the philosopher-statesmen who wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and who governed America in the early years of the Republic. Apart from Washington—the Eisenhower of the 18th century—the first Presidents were men of ideas, to whom the unity of theory and practice was as obvious as it was to the early Bolsheviks, and whose challenge to the established world order was almost as subversive. Jefferson, in particular, was an intellectual to his finger-tips. It is true that he was attacked as such, in terms remarkably similar to those employed against Adlai Stevenson 150 years later. But there is an important difference between Jefferson's experience and Stevenson's: Jefferson won.

YET TWO YEARS after his death the last intellectual to occupy the White House for almost a century had been driven from office, after an election campaign described by a contemporary as a contest between:

John Quincy Adams who can write
And Andrew Jackson who can fight.

Since then the intellectual—as distinct from the man of action who sometimes writes books—has been a suspect figure in American politics. And not only in politics. The anti-intellectulism of a Conkling or a Nixon has been fed by, and has in turn helped to feed, a set of attitudes whose causes and consequences can be traced in almost every aspect of American cultural history. Professor Hofstadter has tried to identify

[1] *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life.* By RICHARD HOFSTADTER. Cape, 45s.

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and explain the most persistent of these attitudes in his new book. In doing so he has illuminated some of the darkest corners of the American mind. But it would be unfortunate if *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* were dismissed in this country as of purely American concern. Implicitly, at least, the questions it provokes have disturbing implications for Britain, and particularly for the British Left.

THE DANGERS in Professor Hofstadter's undertaking are obvious. As he points out himself, it would be absurd to portray American history as nothing more than a running fight between the "eggheads and the fatheads." A study of American civilisation written in terms of anti-intellectualism would be as unbalanced as a study of American business written in terms of bankruptcies. In the 20th century, at least, America has been the arsenal of democracy in an intellectual, as well as in a military and political, sense. The notion that Western Europe must provide the Greeks to civilise America's Roman Empire rests on a fantasy: America is the Greece, as well as the Rome, of the Western world. By the same token it would be misleading to suggest that American anti-intellectualism necessarily leads to the persecution of intellectuals, or even to a refusal to give them an honoured place in society. It is true that many intellectuals were persecuted during the anti-Communist frenzy symbolised by Joe McCarthy. But although McCarthyism drew upon the anti-intellectual currents in American life, it also drew upon other and less familiar sources. McCarthy's hearings cannot be interpreted simply as a replay of the Scopes trial. As for the social status of the American intelligentsia, Professor Lipset has shown that it is a good deal higher, according to survey data, than most American intellectuals seem to think. "Those in intellectual occupations," he writes, "have about the same prestige in America as important businessmen, bankers, and corporation directors."[2] Above all, it would be misleading to suggest that anti-intellectualism in America (or anywhere else) exists in an unadulterated form. The intellectual often likes to think of himself as one of a beleaguered minority, surrounded by howling yahoos. In fact the anti-intellectual yahoo is a figment of the intellectual's imagination. No one would reach for his revolver when he heard the word "culture" unless he had a nagging sense of cultural inferiority. In the United States, more than in most countries, anti-intellectualism is one side of the coin whose other side is a long tradition of popular education and an anxious respect for the things of the mind.

Yet these qualifications do not invalidate the contrast between Jefferson's America and Adlai Stevenson's. Professor Hofstadter examines this contrast in three main fields: politics, religion, and education. He shows that the Jacksonian Revolution which drove John Quincy Adams from power had a parallel in the revivalist movements which swept America at intervals from the end of the 18th century. Where the Jacksonians sought to democratise politics, the revivalists in effect democratised God. Inevitably, they found it necessary to jettison the forbidding intellectualism of the old New England theocracy. A democratic God must be an accessible God; complicated theology expressed in learned sermons must be abandoned for the sake of a broad popular appeal. From being a spiritual shepherd whose power rested on Authority, the minister became a salesman whose success depended on his ability to please. And not only to please: to excite, to inspire, and to save. In the 18th and early 19th centuries organised religion had evidently been left behind by the tide of colonisation. In the middle of the 18th century, Professor Hofstadter tells us, America had a smaller proportion of church members than any other nation in Christendom. In 1800 only about one American out of fifteen belonged to a church. The revivalists had a vast harvest to win. In the circumstances it is easy to see that mass conversion, on the largest possible scale, might seem more urgent than the careful supervision of the already converted; that intellectual discipline could be seen as an impediment to the sort of emotional response by which conversions can most easily be produced; and that ministers would come to be judged, not by their learning, but by the number of converts they were able to win.

AS WITH RELIGION, so with education. In colonial New England, education was broad-based, but nevertheless élitist; and in its basic assumptions, intellectualist. Its purpose was to produce an educated ministry; in the last resort, the qualities it tried to foster were intellectual rather than practical. In the 19th century both these characteristics were viewed with increasing suspicion. The old Puritan respect for education survived, but its character changed. Education came to be seen as a means to an end, or rather to three ends: as a useful ally in the struggle to subdue a continent; as a way of fortifying democracy and breaching the walls of privilege; and most of all, perhaps, as the

[2] S. M. Lipset: *Political Man* (London, 1960), p. 323. It is true, of course, that survey data are powerless to show whether those in intellectual occupations are valued *as intellectuals*, or merely as the possessors of useful intellectual skills.

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agency by which a heterogeneous mass of immigrants could be welded into a united people. These imperatives produced the appropriate ideological response. Just as the needs of imperial administration were reflected in the code of leadership and service inculcated in English public schools at the end of the 19th century, so the practical tasks which the American education system was called upon to perform were reflected in the code of "life adjustment" which seems to prevail in most American secondary schools to-day. And just as the English public-school code subordinated the claims of intellect to the demands of character-building, so the American life-adjustment code subordinates them to the demands of practical utility, equal opportunity, and social harmony. The result is the kind of aptitude implied in the following passage from a report by the Office of Education, quoted by Professor Hofstadter:

> A considerable number of children, estimated at about four million, deviate sufficiently from mental, physical, and behavioural norms to require special educational provision. Among them are the blind and partially seeing, the deaf and the hard of hearing, the speech-defective, the crippled, the delicate, the epileptic, the mentally deficient, the socially maladjusted, *and the extraordinarily gifted* [Hofstadter's italics].

IT IS AT THIS POINT that Professor Hofstadter's study is most relevant to Britain. A certain degree of anti-intellectualism is almost certainly inevitable in any advanced society. The modern state cannot survive without intellectual expertise. Increasingly, the decisions that shape men's lives are taken on the basis of expert advice which the vast majority of those affected cannot understand, far less challenge. A century ago major issues could be debated in public on the same intellectual level as that on which major decisions were taken. To-day this is demonstrably untrue. A lay audience could grasp the reasoning that led Peel to abandon the Corn Laws or Lincoln to oppose the extension of slavery: by 1949 the reasoning that led the Labour Government to devalue the pound was clearly unintelligible to several members of the Parliamentary Labour Party.[3] This applies even more obviously to crucial decisions in defence policy, which may determine the nation's security. But this means, of course, that the expert's power is as mysterious as it is extensive. The scientist in his white coat, even

[3] Indeed, after reading between the lines of Douglas Jay's recent account of the devaluation crisis one begins to wonder how far it was intelligible even to the Cabinet (cf. Douglas Jay's essay on Gaitskell in *Hugh Gaitskell*, edited by W. T. Rodgers, Thames & Hudson, 25s.).

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the man from Whitehall in his pin-stripe trousers, is the witch-doctor of modern society: feared and even hated, in proportion as he is respected. It is true, of course, that he is not necessarily an intellectual, although he uses the practical results of intellectual research. It is hardly surprising, however, if this distinction is too subtle for the general public.

But although a certain degree of anti-intellectualism may be inevitable, that is hardly a reason for actively encouraging it even where it is not. After reading Professor Hofstadter's account of the roots of anti-intellectualism in the American schools, one cannot help wondering whether this is happening in Britain to-day. The anti-intellectual attitudes he describes have a long, and in many ways a worthy ancestry. The high-school principal I quoted above, who thought that reading could be equated with playing the violin, and spelling with baking a cherry pie, did not spring from nowhere. He was produced, above all, by two factors: the emphasis on practical utility as distinct from intellectual activity for its own sake, which has been a persistent feature of American cultural history; and the attempt, which began in the nineteenth century, to democratise American society through the class-room rather than through a direct assault on the sources of economic power. Both factors can be detected in the debate on education policy which is taking place in this country now.

THE ROBBINS REPORT, for example, has been discussed almost wholly in terms of the alleged economic benefits of university expansion. In the short run this is understandable. In a philistine country like this one, an attempt to argue the case for university expansion on cultural and humanitarian grounds alone might well fail. Expansionists can be excused for using philistine arguments when there is such a powerful philistine opposition to beat down. Yet there are profound dangers in this strategy. Once it is conceded that higher education should be seen primarily as an economic investment, it becomes exceedingly hard to justify the forms of higher education from which no economic return can be expected. If the point of a university is to produce more scientists, so that the country can grow even wealthier than it is now, why spend money on classicists, or philosophers, or art-historians?

The second point is more complicated, but no less important. Professor Hofstadter shows that intellectuals came under fire in American politics largely because they were popularly associated, during the Jacksonian Revolution, with the patrician oligarchy of the Eastern seaboard. Implicitly, at least, he also suggests that the intellect came under fire in the American classroom for a basically similar reason. Once education is seen primarily as a sort of battering ram to break down the walls of privilege and establish equality of opportunity, the intellectual's position is almost bound to become painfully ambivalent. In a straightforwardly hierarchical society, those at the bottom of the pyramid can at least console themselves with the reflection that the dice were loaded against them. In a society where class divisions survive, but where equality of opportunity is believed to exist, those who fall behind in the race have no such cushion for their self-esteem. In such a society, intellectual ability becomes a weapon—respected for its worldly value, but hated for its intrinsic unfairness. In a truly egalitarian society this would no longer be so, for education would no longer be a sort of escalator up which the few rise to power, while the many are condemned to fall back. But a truly egalitarian society cannot be created by educational means alone. If Professor Hofstadter's book has a moral for this country, it is that the aspect of Jacksonian Democracy which most needs to be emulated here is its attack on the United States Bank, not its suspicion of Harvard and Yale.

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Keats the Man

John Keats. By WALTER JACKSON BATE. *Oxford*, 55s.

John Keats: The Making of a Poet. By AILEEN WARD. *Secker & Warburg*, 50s.

THERE HASN'T been a new biography of Keats for many years; now, by an odd chance, two of them have turned up together, both very good. In view of the research and criticism devoted to Keats during the past generation it must seem strange that the gap hasn't been filled earlier than this. But it should be remembered that Keats himself appears to provide some powerful arguments against the desirability of literary biography in general. There is something faintly incongruous in setting out to display the character of a man of genius who believed that "Men of Genius have not any individuality, any determined character." The most famous tags in the letters—negative capability, the chameleon poet, a life of continual allegory—are almost all calculated to discourage the fact-grubbing biographer. This is an aspect of Keats which particularly appeals to modern tastes; he has become a hero of the cult of impersonality, a favourite text for sermons on the absolute distinction between what a poet feels and what he writes. "His art is happy, but who knows his mind?"

It is only by ripping a phrase like "negative capability" out of its context that critics have been able to take it with owlish literalism. Keats was no mystic; the zigzagging spontaneity of his letters makes it clear that he was trying to achieve an identity, not to lose one. But for most men—even for most poets—an identity is a hard shell which constricts their growth. "Each of the moderns like an Elector of Hanover governs his petty state"—but Keats would rather ransack an empire like Cortez. He talks of "annulling self," but ultimately this means enlarging the self, and there is no contradiction in his having recommended to Shelley "self-concentration, selfishness perhaps." The ideal poetic personality is open, fluid, tentative, only in order to be able to absorb more and more experience. But experience still has to be selected, mastered, rearranged; the imagination is active as well as absorptive, and meets the external world half-way. A poet is an explorer rather than an amorphous sponge; his presence is needed to bring to life "things semi-real," and he doesn't so much register experience as "greet" it. "The eagle's nest is finer for the Mountaineer has look'd into it."

BOTH WALTER JACKSON BATE and Aileen Ward are essentially concerned with the heroic Keats,

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for whom the world was a "vale of Soul-making." Professor Bate's book is very long and very learned, but it is no mere campus blockbuster: it is humane, sensitive, deeply considered, written from the heart and not from the card-index. Obviously it is going to be the standard life of Keats for a long time to come. But it would be a pity if it were allowed to cast too heavy a shadow over Miss Ward's admirable biography, which is more condensed and less professorial but nevertheless a very substantial and richly detailed piece of work. Professor Bate examines Keats' ideas and literary technique more closely, and on the comparatively few occasions where his judgment differs from Miss Ward's he carries greater weight: in his fairly sympathetic estimate of Benjamin Bailey (of the "holiness of the heart's affections" letter), for instance, who emerges from Miss Ward's pages as an unamiable prig. On the other hand, Miss Ward is a graceful writer (apart from the opening pages, where she falters), and in many ways her book is superior as a straight narrative. She also has more revealing things to say about several important aspects of Keats's career, notably his years as a medical student. The poet who could rival Rilke in his imaginative acceptance of whatever exists ("he has affirmed that he can conceive of a billiard ball that it may have a sense of delight from its own roundness, smoothness, volubility, and the rapidity of its motion") was also an altruist who hoped, in quite practical terms, "to do the world some good." Keats warned Shelley to curb his magnanimity, but in much of his own best work, from *Sleep and Poetry* to the second *Hyperion*, there is an underlying tug-of-war between joy and magnanimity, between the image of life as

> *A laughing schoolboy, without grief or care,*
> *Riding the springy branches of an elm*

and the urge to shoulder his share of the miseries of the world. Certainly a surgeon's dresser soon saw enough misery to last a lifetime, in the days before anæsthetics or antiseptics, when patients were carried into the operating theatre half-stupefied with drink and strapped down on the table.

Miss Ward suggests that Keats may have recalled his time at Guy's when he came to describe the fallen Titans in *Hyperion*:

> *Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,*
> *As though in pain; for still upon the flint*
> *He ground severe his skull, with open mouth*
> *And eyes at horrid working....*

This I find illuminating, just as it is illuminating to be reminded by both Miss Ward and Professor Bate, when they come to discuss *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, of the extraordinary story of "Amena" (though Bate makes less of the episode). Going through his brother Tom's papers after his death, Keats discovered that the series of love-letters sent to Tom from a mysterious girl, "Amena Bellafila," were in fact a hoax perpetrated by a friend, Charles Wells. It was a schoolboy practical joke (Wells was only seventeen), but Keats believed that it had hastened Tom's death, and worked himself up into a fury. Five days later he wrote *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.

Professor Bate cites a large number of literary sources for *La Belle Dame*, and no doubt they explain more about the poem than Amena, just as Milton is more directly relevant than the operating-theatre to the lines from *Hyperion*. Poets are made as well as born—made by learning from other poets. Keats achieves his amazing effects of empathy because he is abnormally sensitive not so much to nature as to language, to an image like Spenser's "sea-shouldering whales." Anyone might have lost his temper with Charles Wells, but nobody else would have been likely to have had (as Robert Gittings points out) the half-lines of Cary's Dante running through his head at the same time. But why be forced to make a choice between literary and biographical sources where they have fused indissolubly together? With a poet whose best work is as concentrated and distilled as that of Keats, all roads lead to Xanadu. Critics nowadays often issue a standard warning about the dangers of letting biography get in the way of poetry itself, or using it as a substitute. There is a good deal of truth in the attitude that our first concern should be with the words and nothing but the words. But pushed too far it becomes inhuman. A knowledge of the forces which have gone into the making of a poem helps it to grow or deepen in our minds. Poems aren't, after all, like stamps which can be guaranteed to give a collector the same thrill every time he goes through his album.

NOT THAT EXCUSES are called for. It would be ludicrous to apologise for recounting this most miraculous of lives. Professor Bate comments that as one recalls Keats' story, the drama of a tough little orphan from nowhere, "the thought of Dickens grows upon one as the years pass." It is a suggestive remark. But Keats was on the whole a more attractive man than Dickens, exemplary in his candour, resolution, and good nature. Both these biographies bring out very strongly the masculine Keats, the humorous Keats, almost one might say the Regency Keats (for Regency and Romantic were more mixed up in life than they were in literature: it is pleasing to recall that Fanny

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Brawne was a cousin of Beau Brummell). And eventually, of course, we are left with the tragic Keats; the end is a horrible mess (the doctors who conducted the post-mortem reported that "the lungs were entirely destroyed"), and the last months of "posthumous life" in Rome almost unbearable to read about.

With an end like this in view, biographers are tempted to hustle Keats a little too quickly along his way to Maturity. If anything is missing from either of these fine books, it is a consideration of the kind of case put by John Bayley in his British Academy lecture on "Keats and Reality," where Keats' greatness is seen as intimately bound up with his vulgarity, his capacity to "universalise the erotic." At any rate, I'm not sure that Professor Bate does full justice to the early poetry. There is more to the 1817 volume than *Chapman's Homer*, while even the notorious bits of bad taste in *Endymion*—"those lips, O slippery blisses," the much-derided plums "ready to melt between an infant's gums," and so forth—are not so much embarrassing as disturbing: disturbing because they are so vivid, so Keatsian. Keats was a poet of pleasure: his submission to Leigh Hunt and the leafy luxury phase surely did him far more good than harm, even if it was something which he had ultimately to outgrow.

John Gross

War without Victory

By Alastair Buchan

ONE EFFECT of living in a period of revolutionary change is the blunting of one's sense of the root causes of change, and the dulling of one's power of recall, from sheer overcrowding of the memory. So much has happened in the past ten or fifteen years to pound and twist the shape of international relations—the H-bomb, Suez, the ballistic missile, the emergence of the Afro-Asian countries, the Congo, the Rome Treaty, de Gaulle, Cuba, the Sino-Soviet split, and so on—that we are inclined to overlook the most seminal event of them all, the Korean war, or to think of it merely as a local skirmish between the super-powers before they devised more subtle forms of bargaining.

The ramifications of the Korean war, direct and indirect, were immense. It caused something like four million casualties and probably stunted the development of Korea itself for a century. It embittered Sino-American relations to a far greater degree than the Communist victory over Chiang, creating a cleft in the relations of the great powers which remains quite unhealed a decade later. It converted NATO and the European-American relationship from a traditional coalition into an international system. It directly influenced the American, and probably the Soviet, decision to develop the H-bomb. By doubling and tripling military budgets it accelerated the technological arms race, while at the same time saddling all the major countries with large arsenals of obsolescent World War II weapons, which they later became anxious to unload in the form of military aid to client states. The political and economic strains which rearmament imposed led directly to the evolution of massive retaliation strategies, first in the United States, then in Britain, then in the Soviet Union, and now in Europe. While it lifted the American economy out of the depression caused by post-war transformation, it did enormous damage to the structure of raw material prices and thus to the long-term interests of the developing countries. And it profoundly affected the domestic political climate of several countries. Korea bred McCarthy and provided Eisenhower with the illusion that he was the saviour of his country. It ruined Adlai Stevenson and offered Aneurin Bevan an opportunity to split the Labour Party. And it gave Mao the opportunity he needed to exert really firm authority over China.

In fact the major powers have been struggling ever since to control the forces unleashed by the Korean war. It is only now, nearly fourteen years after 150 old tanks rumbled southwards one summer morning over an artificial boundary in an unimportant little country on the road to nowhere, that they are beginning to see the first glimmerings of success.

AND YET, despite the casualties, the suffering, the hatred, and the enduring harm which Korea caused, there were gains. Though the ability of the United States and her allies to resist the

Korea: the Limited War. By David Rees, Macmillan, 50s.

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aggression under the authority of the United Nations was partly accidental, it illustrated, very early in its life, that the UN had a greater authority and a sounder constitution than the League. It gave the two super-powers direct experience, relatively early in their confrontation of each other, of the dangers of a resort to force, even by proxy, so that they had some case material, not just the extrapolations of thinkers and analysts, on which to ground their plans and precautions. It made it essential, quite early in the Cold War, to evolve an up-to-date theory of limited war, and if it created a domestic explosion in the United States it was better this happened sooner rather than later. Think what harm a MacArthur or a McCarthy could have done in the thermonuclear missile age.

Mr. Rees sums up the credit side as follows:

> In sticking to a Clausewitzian policy of waging limited war as an instrument of policy, the Truman Administration did keep the coalition intact, repelled the Communist aggression, and strengthened Western defences so that other Eastern bloc advances were deterred and prevented. In retrospect this is the major Western political achievement since 1945. The tragedy of the fall of the Democrats was that, in displaying greater strategic insight than Roosevelt, Truman was unable to appear as war leader so great were the absolutist confusions of American public opinion. Yet American involvement in Korea, the greatest and noblest act of recent American history, and which cost the country over 142,000 casualties and perhaps $20 billion, more than any other action gives the United States the moral right to Western leadership. The irony of the great limited war of the 1930s in Spain and the total war of the 1940s was that democrats were forced into alliance with one monster in fighting to defeat another. This did not happen in Korea. While the Korean decision was deeply rooted in Western self-interest as well as idealism, and in spite of the ambiguities of defending a régime not completely democratic, in Korea there was as good a cause to fight for as the West will ever find, for no completely untainted crusade has ever existed.

I do not agree with all of these judgments, for the Democrats were doomed before the Korean war ever broke out, for reasons that had little to do with Korea, in just the same way that Sir Alec is probably doomed for reasons that have little to do with Malaysia, Cyprus, or East Africa. And the moral right to leadership depends on the views of those who are led.

But essentially Mr. Rees is right, and the heroes of this grim story are not the soldiers at the front, brave though they were, but Truman and Acheson, Marshall and Bradley, refusing either to abandon South Korea to its fate or to extend the war to the Chinese mainland in face of a mounting wave of abuse from both Left and Right, from their own countrymen and from the Chinese. Re-reading the record of their dogged adherence to the principle of limited objectives one cannot help feeling that the first phase of American post-war leadership had a quality of heroic simplicity, quite different from the necessarily more calculating actions of equally resolute men like Kennedy, McNamara, and Maxwell Taylor.

THE STORY of the Korean war is a very complex one. Before aggression occurred in June, 1950, the Administration had based the Far Eastern aspect of its containment policy on air power and had very little in the way of ground forces with which to bring immediate aid to the ROK forces. The American decision to resist the aggression involved therefore a tremendous risk and was described by Truman as the toughest of his whole term of office. It was not immediately effective, and during the breathless days of the Pusan perimeter it looked as if the United States army and marines, the only effective troops in the West except for the scattered British army, might be driven into the sea. Then came MacArthur's brilliantly successful landing at Inchon which cut the supply lines of the North Koreans and enabled the Eighth Army to break out from the bridgehead. The military success of the UN forces, coupled with the rising domestic pressure at home, weakened the Administration's good judgment, and made it alter its objective from restoring the *status quo ante* to reunifying Korea. Everyone concerned, as Acheson later admitted with characteristic candour, was wrong in believing that the Chinese would not react if the UN forces reached the Yalu. By the time that MacArthur had been given the authority to undertake the final offensive that would smash the North Korean forces, Peking was already preparing a massive intervention which resulted in the fierce battle of the Chongchon, the retreat of the UN forces, and the eventual stabilisation of the line near the 38th parallel in the spring of 1951.

As MacArthur's military judgment deserted him—for after Inchon he made every kind of mistake, relying on bad intelligence and confusing lines of command—so he became more insistent that his reputation must be saved by a total solution which would carry the war into China. The Administration's decision after the Chongchon to revert to its original objective of containing aggression coincided with an increasing impatience with the whole concept of containment as American casualties rose and as the Republicans at last found a real issue for

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the Presidential election that was now looming over the horizon. The Administration reached a position when it could not issue any new threat to the Chinese without alienating the British or refrain without alienating the Republicans. When Truman relieved MacArthur of his command in April, 1951, he was reasserting the Commander-in-Chief's rights of control over an insubordinate Oriental satrap, but he was also ensuring that the war was brought right into the middle of American domestic politics.

By the time the MacArthur hearings in the Senate were concluded in the summer of 1951 the military front had become static and the negotiations for a cease-fire had opened. But the Truman Administration, which had taken all the risks, was denied any of the fruits of success —it did not aspire to victory. Unwilling to use strategic threats for fear of provoking a war with the Soviet Union at a time when Western Europe was thought (perhaps wrongly) to be still hopelessly vulnerable, it had no leverage to force the Chinese to conclude a settlement. Acheson and Bradley believed that by successfully resisting aggression in Korea they could create a new diplomatic situation and force a revision of Communist aims. The interminable meetings at Panmunjon proved that this was not the case so what had started as a clearly-cut test of will degenerated into a slanging match in which the Chinese used their skill in propaganda about bacteriological warfare and so on, and in prisoner indoctrination, to weaken the Western case with Afro-Asian opinion whose importance was growing all the time. Eisenhower and Dulles made full use of the popular discontent with containment to achieve their electoral ends, yet once in power they accepted it entirely. But in order to acquire some leverage they made it privately known to the Chinese that if an armistice were not signed they would apply nuclear force. It has always been supposed that this led to the final Chinese signature of the armistice agreement in July, 1953, despite Syngman Rhee's last minute attempt to sabotage it. It was probably the success of this policy which gave Dulles a quite false idea of the efficacy of nuclear threats in great power relations when he promulgated his famous doctrine of "massive retaliation" the following year.

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come from Britain. He has put a great deal of research and hard work into it, and has woven together the different threads of the narrative, military, political, and diplomatic, with exemplary care and skill. The result is a long book which could have been somewhat shortened if the analysis of the military operations had been simplified. And it is an important book, for it clarifies without distorting a series of events which have created much of the framework of the contemporary scene. No one who wishes to understand the world of to-day can ignore Korea, and should turn to Mr. Rees as his guide.

THE BOOK contains, however, certain weaknesses. In the first place, though it is planned on a Macaulayan scale, Mr. Rees' style lacks the Macaulayan flow to bear the reader easily along. In places it is very clumsy, in places it is no better than debased time-lifery: thus "With this dilemma in the background, it was necessary to hard sell the rearmament programme in the debate in the Commons on 14–15 February on the Conservative motion that the Government was too incompetent to carry it out." There is hardly a page that does not have a sentence which must be read twice to grasp its meaning.

In the second place, it seems to me that Mr. Rees has fallen into a common British error of assuming that the reasons why a limited war in Korea was so distasteful to large sections of the American public, and created such fierce internal tensions, arose from peculiarities of American society and history. He suggests that the desire for a showdown with the Communists was an aspect of the liberal approach to war, something to be rejected or else fought through to victory, and that this absolutist tendency was increased by America's former isolation and lack of experience in using war as an instrument of policy; the words "crusading" and "idealistic" are used extensively to describe this attitude. But in fact the United States has not been isolationist in relation to the Far East since the 1890s, and had considerable experience of limited war, with Mexico, with Spain, and above all with the British; the Clausewitzian approach has certainly been no more alien to American than to British thought in this century. To anyone who lived in the United States during the Korean war, as I did, there is a simpler explanation for the tremendous frustration of the American public. It was the biggest limited war in modern history, dwarfing adventures like the Spanish civil war into insignificance. American casualties were twenty times those of Britain, the second largest contributor of forces apart from the ROK; hardly a

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day went by without hearing of the death or capture of a friend's son or brother; in everything except rationing the United States was on a total war footing. In other words, the impact of Korea on American society was as great as that of the earlier world wars, and all the time there was a big stick—the B29s and the atom bombs—lying unused. The old imperial European powers never had to face such a challenge to their restraint as confronted the Truman Administration. It therefore deserves the greatest credit for having pursued a policy of limited war so early in the nuclear age. Curiously enough it was not until ten years after the Korean armistice that the Russians, who Mr. Rees credits with "surgical skill in using force," began to start educating their public in the need to consider limitations in the use of force in war (in the 2nd edition of Marshal Sokolovsky's *Military Strategy*).

Third, he suggests that our final judgment as to whether Truman or MacArthur was right must rest on a decision as to whether we have made good use of the years since Korea to strengthen world security and Western cohesion, and to keep Communist ambition contained. I think this is too short a view. In point of fact we have not made particularly good use of the time: Western cohesion is less apparent now than it was ten years ago and the authority of the UN has extended only marginally. Russia has grown very much stronger and China will grow stronger. But these facts provide no kind of historic justification for a strategic showdown with the Communist powers in the days of the American nuclear monopoly. A strategic attack by the West in Asia in the 1950s would have laid the certain seed of a strategic attack on the West in the '70s, or '80s; thanks to Truman's courage there is a reasonable prospect that we may avoid this.

Master James

Henry James and His Cult. By MAXWELL GEISMAR. *Chatto & Windus*, 30s.

"FROM the ages of costume to the ages of none the drop is more than pitiful, and distinction is shattered by the fall. If you are to be perpetuated, in short, it is nothing that you be great or good—it is everything that you be dressed." Henry James drew this moral, "startling perhaps in its levity," from a visit to the National Portrait Gallery in 1897; it makes an interesting text for a consideration of his own novels. For he certainly wanted to be perpetuated; and his stories are before all well "dressed"—exquisitely furnished rooms in which the "best" people continually visit the "best," and where the greatest crime is vulgarity. Whether the novels are great or good is another matter, one which Mr. Geismar disposes of with some impatience, though without notable briskness, in his lengthy and somewhat repetitious study. To his eyes at least they are startling in their levity. For James' chosen area of art

> was completely artificial and fanciful; neither British nor American at base, but only compounded of adolescent, or pre-adolescent, visions of what such a world *should* be like. . . .
>
> Wasn't he in fact the perfect novelist of our primitive finance-capitalism in its first flowering of titans and robber barons; the complete Veblenian artist (though Veblen neglected to use him) of conspicuous display and ostentatious consumption in the arts?

THE PLAINTIVE NOTE in that rhetorical question is one that recurs to the point of monotony in *Henry James and His Cult*; it suggests that no very real argument is being conducted, and to a large extent that is true. Although the admirers of Henry James are severely criticised, Mr. Geismar does not allow them fully to present their case; they are used mainly to score rhetorical points. Of course, some *are* scored, but in such a random way that the reader has no sense that a case has been demolished. He does not seem to be aware that there is a *real* controversy among scholars and critics as to the value of James' work; Dr. Leavis, for example, who has made some damaging criticisms of the later novels in *The Great Tradition*, a work not unknown in America, is never mentioned—Mr. Priestley is almost the only English critic to appear in the book. (He is praised for "brilliantly" describing the Master's limitations in *Literature and Western Man*.)

These omissions are not surprising when we consider that Mr. Geismar's motives in writing this study were primarily social. He sees the "cult" of Henry James as a peculiarly contemporary and nasty phenomenon, believing that it is the limitations and "lacks" of James that have drawn to him as admirers

> all those contemporary critics who had turned away from the radicalism of the thirties; or who had been against it in the first place; or who, in the next generation of the forties and fifties no longer wished to concern themselves with anything remotely bearing on the social question.

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James' evasion of reality, that is, his innocence of the "pressures of finance-capitalism" which have shaped the world in which we live, meets its counterpart in the non-politics of these academic critics. "Wasn't the cult of James a revealing symbol and symptom of an age and society which wanted to dwell like him in some false world of false art and false culture?"

Well, it could be, I suppose, although it doesn't sound *very* likely. On the whole this line of thought, never given the status of more than a point of view, is to be regretted in *Henry James and His Cult*, as it tangles itself too readily with the consideration of James himself, to the detriment of both the argument and the style: all those rhetorical questions. Leaving, then, this contemporary reference apart, we are faced with essentially two theses: the first concerns James' narrowness, the second his immaturity. James is criticised as having small to experience of life, confining himself mainly to the English "leisure-classes" with whom he dealt almost exclusively in his fiction. His picture of European old-world culture, we learn, is as distorted as his view of New World puritan non-culture, and the famous International Theme of his novels is entirely the product of the Jamesian fancy; for such Europeans and such Americans never existed. James couldn't in such matters see straight; the civilised aristocrats of *The American*, the Bellegardes, for instance,

> are in reality perfect examples of the petty, ingrown prejudices of the French *haute-bourgeoisie*. One is struck by the deference which James accords to a group whose rigid, narrow, suspicious, and materialistic values had already been dissected by a line of native French writers from Stendhal and Balzac on.

And just as James' inborn sycophancy and snobbery led him to a hopelessly unreal view of Europe, so, we are told, his rejection of popular values and horror of vulgarity led him to a depiction of the passions as thin-blooded as it is unconvincing. He is an artist who is "*all* vision —or illusion, or enchantment, or magic—and has no recognisable life."

IT MUST be admitted that some of James' social attitudes weren't especially engaging. He *was* a snob, and Mr. Geismar can on occasion make us blush for him. But at the same time his attitude to high society was far more subtle and discriminating than Mr. Geismar suggests: and this is probably the right point at which to say that he shows little sign of discrimination himself. The reader will not gather from *his* account that the tone of *The Europeans* ("a minor tale") differs vastly from that of *The Portrait of a Lady* ("a kind of superior romance melodrama which is entertaining to read, and completely inadequate as serious literary commentary on the life of James' period, or certainly our own"). It seems to escape Mr. Geismar altogether that James possessed a considerable sense of humour, most evident in his early novels. He believes that Gertrude Wentworth in *The Europeans*, New England born and bred, is "a kind of aboriginal sleeping princess whose 'dull eyes' . . . are to be awakened by the European prince to a vision of true gaiety, love and pleasure." Well, doubtless that is how *she* might think of herself; but James is at pains to show us that her prince is an amiable but unprincipled sponger whose own deviousness meets its match in Gertrude's unconscious and, as it were, innocent duplicity. Not a hint of this appears in the single page which Mr. Geismar devotes to the novel.

As for the limited social area of James' novels: he was fascinated by money because money gives not only leisure but power, power and freedom. The rich in this sense are test cases for humanity; they have the ability to choose, without coercion from, say, the "pressures of finance-capitalism." They never, in James, seem to choose very well, for he is a pessimistic writer whose pessimism is tempered by a pervasive and not unfeeling irony. If there are few characters in James without money, there are few who are not to some degree corrupted by it, though James does not allow us an easy satisfaction at this state of affairs. Mr. Geismar makes a fuss about the story of the perfect butler, Brooksmith, who is disqualified for other service by the perfection of his relation to his master, Mr. Offord. He seems to think that the story illustrates James' faith in the established order of things, that it is as simple as *The Admirable Crichton*: "in this tragi-comedy of the servile class . . . we are left with a presumption of a strict social hierarchy extending even unto the gates of heaven." But this is to ignore the *tone* of the story altogether; the narrator, whose admiration for man and master is boundless, is plainly a fool. When he reflects, after the butler's ignominious yet tragic disappearance, that Brooksmith "had indeed been spoiled," the last word is carefully used by James. Brooksmith was spoiled both because he had been treated too well by Offord, and also because he had been *despoiled*, his loyalty treated as spoils, the right of the victor, by the master who left him, after his death, a mere eighty pounds as reward. Without claiming greatness for this story, one might suggest that it is not half so simple as Mr. Geismar would have us think; it is an *indictment* as well as a commemoration of the social hierarchy.

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THE MOST NOTABLE EXAMPLE of the freedom to choose which springs from money is to be found in *The Portrait of a Lady*. Isabel Archer is given a fortune by her cousin, Ralph Touchett, because "she wishes to be free," as he puts it; she understands, too:

> "A large fortune means freedom, and I'm afraid of that. It's such a fine thing, and one should make such a good use of it. If one shouldn't one would be ashamed. And one must keep thinking; it's a constant effort. I'm not sure it's not a greater happiness to be powerless."

She *is* unhappy in the end; she marries a scoundrel, Gilbert Osmond, but she won't leave him to go away with the man who "really" loves her, Caspar Goodman. Many readers find this hard to take; Isabel rejects Caspar when there seems to be every reason for acceptance. Mr. Geismar views it as yet another occasion on which James showed his aversion for sex and preference for renunciation. But the point is that to accept Caspar would be to compromise Isabel's freedom, and to go back on her choice of Osmond would be to render her choice, and her concept of herself choosing, meaningless. When Caspar desperately embraces her it is an "act of possession"; the novel is about Isabel's struggle *not* to be possessed, and to be herself. In her final dilemma she will be compromised whether she decides to be "possessed" by Caspar, or to return to the now despicable Osmond—that is the tragedy. She takes the more difficult course because it does not involve absolute annihilation in her own eyes. That is what James finds to be admirable in her. And (to risk a touch of rhetoric) surely it is admirable? Of course it is not like life, in the sense that it is not a typical happening; but art is not always concerned with the typical, as a reading of Shakespeare or Dickens would suggest.

This is not to deny that the circumstances of, and even the promptings for, Isabel's "renunciation" spring from James's own neurosis. Mr. Geismar is at his best in those parts of his book that draw out the relation between the stories and James's sick fantasies. It *is* true that in some respects James never grew up—in this he resembles, for example, Turgenev. But the important thing is what he made of his own unhappiness. It is not enough to assume that because, shall we say, his peeping, prying, voyeuristic heroes and "knowing" children derive from James's own childhood spying at his parents' bedroom door (quite hypothetical),

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COLLINS

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the hero of *The Aspern Papers* becomes a cardboard cut-out from the unconscious. Mr. Geismar is at his best in his account of this *nouvelle*; but it does not cease to be good because "curiosity, greed, abstract manipulation, and neurotic desire" are at its centre. James is not wholly to be *identified* with the "damned publishing scoundrel" who tells the story. On the contrary, he has here, as Mr. Geismar says, objectified his own deepest desires and obsessions; that is why it is one of his masterpieces. The last sentence of *this* story also is full of Jamesian irony, calling out from the reader sympathy and horror at the same time for the narrator. Over his desk hangs the portrait of his literary idol, Aspern, offered as a love-token by poor Miss Tina, whom he has rejected with cruelty. All he can say is: "When I look at it my chagrin at the loss of the letters becomes almost intolerable." But this great dramatic stroke goes ignored, like many others, in *Henry James and His Cult.*

Mr. Geismar, of course, is sceptical of James' dramatic sense, and sees his failure as a dramatist as a traumatic experience from which the novelist never really recovered. He especially abhors the "melodrama" of James' great scenes. *The Wings of the Dove* is consequently described as only another "romance melodrama." A bald summary of the plot *might* suggest this: "Young, beautiful, single, rich, Milly Theale has everything to live for. But her very life is running out, and only the power of love can sustain her. When she finds that love, she also finds a horrifying deception." So runs the blurb on my Dell paperback edition. It sounds ridiculous, but it isn't so, because the grand gestures are imbued with a meaning and force Mr. Geismar does not begin to grasp.

These late Jamesian characters aim at the grand gesture; and like Isabel, they fail just to the extent that they succeed. That is the point. They are "magnificent" to themselves and to each other in their failure. The supreme examples are Milly Theale and Maggie Verver, both of whom attempt to redeem by renouncing; Milly leaves Densher her money though she knows he loves not her but Kate, Maggie redeems her husband by *not saying* how much she knows. But in both cases the gesture goes wrong. Densher and Kate's love is ruined by Milly's well-intentioned act; Maggie redeems Amerigo and Charlotte to a kind of slavery. Seeking to realise themselves in one supreme action, both Milly and Maggie fail—it is the usual Jamesian pessimism.

Essentially, his later novels are dramas of dubiety, of doubts as to identity which eventually prove insoluble. His characters are heroic in their single-minded pursuit of the only knowledge that counts, for them, which is the knowledge of themselves and their relation to other people; but at the last all proves impenetrable to them, all action ends in compromise. However strong James's neurosis, he saw *that* and faced it. But I'm afraid that Mr. Geismar misses it completely.

Martin Dodsworth

Unwritten Hierarchy

Marlborough: An open examination written by the boys. *Kenneth Mason*, 18s.

FOR A PERIODICAL with so international a range as ENCOUNTER, the English public schools must be a rather specialised subject. A book on one particular school, Marlborough, is more specialised still. There is an unwritten hierarchy of public schools which annoys all English people except Etonians, whether they are public school men or not. Westminster was top public school in the eighteenth century. For the last century and a half, Eton has been promoted to top public school, that is to say, the school to which most hereditary landowners send their sons. This does not mean it has the most distinguished pupils. Harrow, generally reckoned second, has long been probably the most distinguished English-speaking school in the world. Living Harrovians to-day conform to no type, as do Etonians and Wykehamists, and include Sir Winston Churchill, Cecil Beaton, Lord Alexander of Tunis, Terence Rattigan, Sir Arthur Bryant, Nehru, Victor Pasmore, King Hussein, Sir John Summerson, Sir Bernard Docker, Sir Harry d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Wyndham Ketton-Cremer, Julian Fane and Sir Edward Hulton. A close runner-up for distinguished pupils is Gresham's School, Holt; yet in the unwritten hierarchy, Gresham's stands below Charterhouse, Haileybury, Rugby, Wellington, and even Marlborough and Clifton.

The reason for this is that even to-day, and most certainly before World War II, Thackeray's standards of the social hierarchy prevailed. This was hereditary landowners first, followed by commissioned ranks in the Army and the Navy, professional people (clergymen, lawyers, bankers, civil servants, teachers, doctors, engineers, scientists), stockbrokers and trade came last with wholesale and manufacturing slightly better class than retail.

Where does Marlborough College stand? In the same Wiltshire town is a Grammar School of much older foundation (Marlborough College

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was opened in 1843 mostly for the sons of clergymen), but as this is a day school, it is automatically lower in the unwritten hierarchy, lower probably even than co-educational boarding schools like Dartington and Bedales. Why this should be is one of those mysteries which puts doctors above dentists and architects above surveyors. There may be no justice in it, but it is there and it has little to do with education so far as passing examinations is concerned. It is a survival of the agricultural age.

One of the fourteen talented boys who have contributed, in their last year at Marlborough College, to this book, has a passion for statistics. He must have driven his fellow pupils and the staff nearly mad by assembling them—0·5% of the school reads ENCOUNTER. The average prefect is 5ft. 9½in. tall and weighs 10 stone 13½lb.—but he has unearthed this interesting information.

The figures for fathers' occupations over the last six years give these approximate percentages:

> Business and Industry 43%; Doctors and Dentists 11%; Civil Service 7%; Clergy 7·5%; Services 10%; Farming 7·5%; Law 7%; University and Teaching 6%; Musicians 0·2%; Journalists 0·1%; Sport 0·1%; Artists and Architects 0·6%.

From this, public school readers may judge where Marlborough stands in the unwritten hierarchy. About 7th I would say, and the delicious, unprofitable argument could go on for columns.

That Marlborough College stands high as a place of education, these essays by the boys on the varied aspects of their school life—games, work, flogging, talk, natural history, sex, hobbies, religion, ethical standards—are ample evidence. Each essay is informative and interesting, especially to those who were educated at Marlborough in the past: Beverley Nichols, Henry Brooke, R. A. Butler, Lord Fisher of Lambeth, Sir Anthony Blunt, James Mason, E. K. Waterhouse, John Edward Bowle, Sir Alan Lascelles, Siegfried Sassoon, Clive Bell.

Certainly in my day no boy would have been allowed to write so frankly about his school and it is unlikely that he would have been able to take so detached and adult an attitude. "A housemaster tends to be subjected to a lot of "oil," ostentatious volunteering, and general desire to please, by those who have serious ambitions for office...." "In a community which is segregated from the opposite sex for three months at a time, it is fairly natural that the boys who are late developers, or who are good-looking in a slightly effeminate way, should be found vaguely attractive by others—in particular by those who are most strongly attracted to girls during the holidays." In my day boys were not allowed guns, fagging and flogging were more prevalent, priggishness hardly recognised as such, not condemned as it is now. There was a good deal of bullying and the food was disgusting and *some* of the masters were unforgivably remote and boring.

The impression this book leaves is that Marlborough is a happier, less conventional and much more interesting and exciting place than it used to be. Boys seem more tolerant and kinder, masters less remote, and the curriculum more varied. The Christian faith is certainly more alive than it used to be. This book puts the lie to a long-cherished illusion I have, that human nature does not change for the better.

John Betjeman

Children Take All

Children take all and give none
but who are we to ask daughter or son
to give us love for a toy or candy bar?
Our demanding tells them what we are.
Pressed against the breasts where they first feed
and circled in our arms they learn our need—
their hunger not as great as our long greed.

Wallace Kaufman

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LETTERS

Max and Virginia Woolf

I WAS AMUSED to see in your December issue that in an interview with Mr. Edmund Wilson, Max Beerbohm said that he "did not care for Virginia Woolf. He had a good word only for her criticism, and he did not seem enthusiastic about that." In 1927 Max spontaneously wrote a letter to my wife beginning thus:

"*Dear Virginia Woolf*—I can't help this familiarity: I seem to know you so well, from *The Common Reader*, a book which I have read twice, and have often dipped into since, and rate above any modern book of criticism (rating it thus quite soberly, all unconfused by your habit of going out of your way to be nice about my essays!). . . ."

LEONARD WOOLF

Monk's House,
Rodmell, Sussex

Wilson's Beerbohm

ADMIRERS of Sir Max Beerbohm will have read with pleasure Mr. Edmund Wilson on his meetings with Sir Max at the Villino Chiaro in March, 1954. I too visited Sir Max later that spring and can confirm much that Mr. Wilson has described—the frailty, the red-rimmed eyes, the impressive head (though the moustache was white, not blond), the unusual hands, the single glass of wine, the rationed cigarettes, the gay patchwork dressing gown made by his sister Dora, the Anglican nun, the murals (but Mr. Wilson should have mentioned Max's favourite of the Duke, Zuleika and Katie Batch), and the kind attentions of Miss Jungmann. Still, I should like to offer some comments. Mr. Wilson makes Miss Jungmann seem to have been merely a former acquaintance, but she had been a friend of the Beerbohms for twenty-five years, especially dear to Florence, who had elicited her promise to come and care for Max if he were alone. Like the Beerbohms, Miss Jungmann was in England during the Second World War, and they were often together. Max and Florence were delighted whenever Elisabeth came to see them and happy when she decided to become an English citizen. They exchanged gifts at Christmas, and in her will, Florence remembered Elisabeth. After the war Miss Jungmann visited them in Rapallo. When Florence's illness became serious, Max wired Miss Jungmann, who came at once, arriving two hours too late to see Florence alive.

As for Miss Jungmann's running the Vilino with only one servant, Florence did that in later years with the devoted Pina, her maid since before the war. Florence herself was an excellent cook and prepared many of Max's meals, concocting delicacies to tempt his ailing appetite.

Perhaps all visitors to the Villino in those last years came away with somewhat different impressions of Max's feeling towards his contemporaries, depending on his mood at the moment. To me, he was extremely critical of Henry James' malicious attitude towards some of his friends, and surely his caricature of James listening at the keyhole of a connubial bedroom can not be considered mild; but he obviously admired James the writer. Nor was his animus against Shaw entirely unmitigated. He had great respect for Shaw's fairness, his kindness, and "the best brain in England."

Though Max praised Sem as a master of caricature, this regard was not mutual, for Sem called Max a commentator, not a caricaturist; his drawings were amusing, but not true caricature. The *Bittersweet* cartoons were done on commission from Max's old friend C. B. Cochrane, and Max undoubtedly felt an obligation to please his subjects. He apologised to Miss Peggy Wood, the heroine, if she should dislike her representation, saying he did not draw pictures of pretty ladies.

For some years I have been gathering material on Max Beerbohm and his wife, who had been an American actress, for a book to be called *Max and America*, and I trust these amendments may clarify some points in Mr. Wilson's appreciative recollection of Sir Max.

KATHERINE LYON MIX

Baker University,
Baldwin, Kansas

Trotsky

IT IS A long time since I have read so urgent and brilliantly expressed a political document as Alasdair MacIntyre's review of the third volume of Isaac Deutscher's Life of Trotsky. In the review, however, there is a single sentence to which I would like to draw attention. Mr. MacIntyre says "socialism can be made only by the workers and not for them." [ENCOUNTER, January.]

Trotsky gave that impression but what he really believed was that socialism was made for the workers by the Leninist political party. Any intensive analysis of his work from 1917 will show that. Perhaps its most striking expression is in his *History of the Russian Revolution* in the chapter called "The Art of Insurrection," where he summed up his unrivalled experience for the benefit of future generations. The climax of that book and of the chapter is the following found on page 168 of Volume III:

> To overthrow the old power is one thing; to take the power in one's own hands is another. The bourgeoisie may win the power in a revolution not because it is revolutionary, but because it is bourgeois. It has in its possession property, education, the press, a network of strategic positions, a hierarchy of institutions. Quite otherwise with the proletariat. Deprived in the nature of things of all social advantages, an insurrectionary

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proletariat can count only on its numbers, its solidarity, its cadres, its official staff.

That was Trotsky's view of the socialist revolution, and it is utterly false, unhistorical, and without sense. The proletariat that he there shows to be the basis of his thought does not exist anywhere. It has got education. It has got a press, a network of strategic positions, and a hierarchy of institutions. What it has not got it can easily possess itself of. Even in the insurrections that take place in the most politically backward countries the insurrectionaries to-day know enough to head, usually first thing, for the radio station. There is not a proletariat in the world which is as Trotsky seemed to believe "in the nature of things" deprived of "all" social advantages. As a matter not only of theory but of empirical fact, the reverse was the case in Trotsky's day and more than ever to-day. It was the consciousness that nowhere there existed what could be called a Leninist party which drove him in his last years to the reversals of policies and conceptions which he had spent his life in advocating.

C. L. R. James

London

MacInnes and Empire

Writing as a dodo, I feel quite safe from retaliation in saying that, having staggered over the (I generously allow) printing errors and irritating ellipses of Mr. Colin MacInnes' article [Encounter, November], I am left with the inescapable belief that he must be joking. No thinking man in this day and age could seriously be both quite so naïve and so irresponsible.

I am (dare I say it?) a Colonial Administrator—a member of an extinct species, a fossil interred in the "now long gone" empire. I actually work in a British Colony in West Africa which—despite its omission from Mr. MacInnes' list—is an area from which our withdrawal is still incomplete. I am one of those wicked colonial practitioners who, through torture, violence and the suppression of democratic will, are, by immutable law, tending to endanger the social life and corrupt the power of Britain. Having spent a number of years and considerable energy, under conditions which I should like Mr. MacInnes to share with me, in trying by every means to awaken ideologically my subject people, I can assure him that no amount of force will persuade the British Government to hold on to the territory for one minute longer than they have to. The territory has, in fact, just attained full internal self-government, just as soon as it asked for it and rather sooner than it was ready for it. It will similarly, I have no doubt, attain independence just as soon as it wants it and a little before it can have any real meaning. Under its rosy cover, Britain will continue for some time to come quietly to balance the country's budget, pay for its development works and provide the technicians and administrators which it still so sadly lacks. The freely elected Government of the country now have the power to dispense with the services of the likes of me and, with my wife and two small children, I am shortly expected to start a new career (I am a little too old) or stop work altogether (I am rather too young). Mr. MacInnes may fondly imagine I mean by this that there will be a wholesale banishing of the sun-helmeted imperialists and a stepping into their highly-polished mosquito boots of the down-trodden subject peoples, at last claiming their birthright. It is a whimsical picture and one often painted in cadmium yellow and cardinal red at anti-colonialist meetings of those who know the colonies through any medium barring firsthand personal experience. Strangely, the picture is inaccurate. The down-trodden peoples are not yet ready to take over our functions and responsibilities. Not only this, but the elected Government know they are not and are asking, nay, urging, us to continue to occupy our own shoes.

But doubtless I am biased, and the fact of the matter is that the elected Government are still suffering from the numbing effect of the years of colonial subjugation which the people have endured. The subtle persuasion exercised by the imperialists who wish to retain their lucrative jobs and the overweening sense of power which they so enjoy is still too strong for them.

Let us then, by all means, chuck the rest of our dependencies into the rag bag along with the Congo; let us snuff out, like Tinkerbell, our fairy Queen, cock a snook at the silly old Rule of Law, publish all our secrets, banish public school boys from the Foreign Office, and stop pretending that we ought to try and curb the sexual immorality of our children. Let us do what anyone tells us to do, however crazy, and let us ignore the stuffy people who would rather we were not crazy. Let us do all these things and let us also, for God's sake, leave Mr. MacInnes to clear up the mess.

R. T. Addis

Bathurst, Gambia

Evtushenko & Enzensberger

The cry of protest by H. M. Enzensberger [Encounter, January], against journalistic schools of falsification is justified and convincing. But isn't it a bit too characteristic of a young German intellectual to equate Eastern and Western misdemeanours so facilely? The source of the calumnious story about Evtushenko was, after all, *Izvestia*. The newspaper dispatches went out from Moscow. I suspect Enzensberger is right in assuming that the Soviet journals would not publish a correction. But is the Western press so totalitarian as he implies? I have myself heard Enzensberger on many West German radio stations, expressing his highly individualistic, unorthodox, heretical views on various subjects, and he also has a literary column of his own in *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg). Surely had he really made the effort to get the anti-Evtushenko canard corrected, he would have been able to reach hundreds of thousands of readers and listeners. One can understand his world-weariness. But it doesn't quite follow that the untruth is on

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the march everywhere and nowhere can be crushed....

At any rate it is encouraging to find at least ENCOUNTER checking and double-checking where so many others mindlessly parroted irresponsible literary gossip.

J. F. GOTTHARD

Frankfurt-am-Main

Towards New European Policies

No ONE imagines any longer that the European Community is faring well. Yet we have to develop an approach and discover a method to stop the spread of disunity.

Lord Gladwyn [ENCOUNTER, December] has made a stimulating suggestion how to meet this situation. Serious attention should be especially given to his reasons for proposing a "democratic and 'autonomous' politico-economic European equivalent of America...."

Writing as a European from Germany, I feel compelled to make one point: here we already do feel rather integrated. If we are dissatisfied at the moment it is as *insiders* and not as "outsiders." This distinction explains the way I would prefer to formulate what I feel to be the immediate tasks.

First, the foundations for the larger unity that we seek have been established in Brussels, Luxemburg, and Strasbourg, and they must not be damaged further.

Second: we must prevent groups of European states in free Europe from falling back into an outmoded rivalry that begins with economic civil war.

Third: the new Europe must not picture itself as being "opposed" to others. On the contrary, to form a lasting peace it must be ready to co-operate on an open world-wide scale.

Fourth: we must not fall prey to "anti-Americanism." We do need Atlantic Partnership and we must work to achieve it.

In the immediate future these would seem to be requirements: to keep the door open for consultations between the members of EFTA and EEC; to utilise the West European Union (WEU) as a bridge between "the Six" and Great Britain; and, finally, we should revitalise the European Council as a platform for influencing public opinion.

The EEC will not recapture its *élan* unless pro-European movements and forces emerge with roots more solid and deep-reaching than the simple imperatives of the economists and the generals. It seems to me that in the coming decade we shall have to wage the real "struggle for Europe."

During the early post-war years there was an unplanned but highly effective synchronisation between the ideas of great Europeans and pro-European pressure groups in various nations. Pressure from below contributed to the fact that something was accomplished on top. Yet everything that has been accomplished or set moving since then is endangered to-day. That danger may be dispelled by renewed pressure from below. The will of the people to have "Europe" is strong in many nations, and their will must again be heard.

There are three specific and pressing tasks. The European Coal & Steel Community and Euratom should be amalgamated with EEC; the influence of existing European parliamentary institutions should be increased; and room ought to be made, vigorously, for democratic participation in European affairs by the people of Europe. Nations will have to accept a kind of new sovereignty which, without cancelling the old ones, does supersede them in specifically defined areas.

I have no controversy with the slogan *"l'Europe des Patries,"* but I would like to see it extended. These "Fatherlands of Europe" ought to recognise that *their* Fatherland is Europe. They should *make* Europe their Fatherland.

Without France Europe is unimaginable to me. But isn't Europe equally unimaginable without England or Germany? Nor can I picture a Europe in which the influence of a single nation dominates.

A Europe composed of states that have lost confidence in one another and in a common future will inevitably lose the confidence of allies and the respect of opponents. The longer Europeans bicker among themselves, the less reason will Soviet Russia or America find for listening to what Europe has to say.

THIS BRINGS ME to Lord Gladwyn's well-reasoned analysis of the theme "Atlantic partnership" and its meaning for Europeans.

It is not a question of our creating a "self-sufficient" Europe. The Europe we need is one that understands exactly what place it can occupy in the world. The United States has repeatedly invited Europe to take part in Atlantic Partnership *as an equal*. Yet will we ever become genuine partners, in that sense, if we on this side do not stand together? How can Europe ever be a world-power if it never speaks with a single voice and acts with a common will?

Until now America's offer has not been suitably answered, not in a way that could be considered binding for Europe. We do owe the United States an answer that reflects the greatest degree of agreement possible. Even should it not be quite the answer that America hopes to hear, isn't more called for than separate answers from Paris, London, and Bonn? Washington should learn where free Europe does stand.

Lord Gladwyn proposes one way of providing a common answer. To my mind, however, Atlantic partnership and the process of European integration are goals of equal importance and urgency. One of them cannot wait for the other. That has bearing, too, on the nuclear armament question. It is necessary that Europe acquire a decisive influence on nuclear strategy. Yet it is neither necessary nor desirable, I think, that Europe splits up one decision-making jurisdiction over the nuclear deterrent. In the trans-Atlantic partnership jurisdiction should remain with the President of the United States.

Writing from Germany as a European, I consider a continued division of Europe quite as dangerous as the unnatural division of Germany. My own

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London

IT IS *a long time since a play in London moved archbishops to protest or brought about a war of pamphlets. In Basle, Rolf Hochhuth's "The Representative" opened in physical mayhem in the foyer and the adjoining streets. In this country its criticism of Pope Pius XII has so far induced a clash of words only. We have had a few plays about living persons but they have for the most part been tame. Right after the Hungarian revolution a play called "Shadow of Heroes" put Messrs. Mikoyan, Rakosi, and Kadar unflatteringly on the stage. The censor has swallowed Mikoyan (and an all-but-identified Macmillan) but has so far jibbed at the Kennedys. Are the libel laws the explanation? Cleon did not issue a writ when Aristophanes guyed him as a rascally butler. Socrates did not fire off a solicitor's letter when he was shown descending from the clouds in a laundry basket. Would Mr. Harold Wilson and Professor Ayer be as tractable? Let us hope so.* THE GUARDIAN

London

THE SITUATION *in which students knew of the connection between the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt in the 14th Century, but were ignorant of "The Communist Manifesto," was criticised by Sir Richard Acland in his Presidential address at the annual conference of Educational Associations.*

He said he had asked students whether any of them could write half a page on the causal connection between the New York Stock Exchange slump of 1929 and the Japanese attack on Manchuria in 1932. "I have not yet met one who could do so."

But students knew they had been taught how to calculate the area of a trapezium.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Manchester

IT IS *once more apparent that the Conservatives' greatest strength lies in their ability to make use of a wide variety of sources. The old gibe that the Conservatives are unwilling to learn from foreign experience can be made no longer. The new annual report pays a glowing tribute to Mr. Isaac Deutscher—the well-known Sovietologist—for the lecture on Sino-Soviet relations which he gave to Conservative Party workers last autumn.*

In a pregnant passage it adds that "in private session, Mr. Deutscher's unequalled knowledge of internal party disputes in the Soviet bloc proved unexpectedly relevant to the domestic affairs of our own party." THE GUARDIAN

London

FILMS *have a great influence on paperback sales. The top flight ranking of Lampedusa's "The Leopard" at the moment is no coincidence. One London bookshop even reported a rush on Kafka's "The Trial," while the film was on.*

But there is a limit to the number of novels available to the paperback publishers. The industry is turning increasingly to non-fiction. There must be plenty of scope for this in a world in which Homer has joined the very select group of paperback authors with U.K. sales of over a million copies. FINANCIAL TIMES

London

FOR A GROUP *that is used to spending heavily on advertising (£7 million last year), it came as quite an admission when Beecham's chairman, Henry Lazell, reported that "Silvikrin Shampoo" had been withdrawn from the American market.*

It was a nice example of what a name shouldn't do for a product. Too many younger American women identified the "silvi" part of the name with greyness and middle age. It couldn't win. THE OBSERVER

Brussels

TO VISIT WATERLOO *is to realise how utterly an Englishman's attitude to war changed in a century. Waterloo is a Sunday afternoon excursion from Brussels, a sort of Battersea Park; and the Briton who goes there in search of national glory or even of Byronic pathos will be disappointed . . . of Wellington and Blücher it is hard to descry the smallest relic. . . . The whole site, in fact, is a memorial to Napoleon, not to his conqueror. One would say, on leaving Waterloo, that it's only abiding Victor was Hugo.* THE TIMES

London

DURING THIS *week, by my reckoning, B.B.C. and I.T.V. between them have provided at least 440 programme hours. Of this how much was devoted to books? The lamentable answer is 40 minutes.*

Any gang of fuzzy-headed pop-singers can get repeated hearings because they are the idols of our affluent adolescents; but the young novelists who may become a part of English literature within a few decades are given no helping hand by those powerful patrons who dominate the air. It will be said, no doubt, that only a minority of license-holders care about books, about writing and poetry, and such-like. But when you come to think about it, almost the entire audience of broadcasting is composed of minorities but some are bigger than others. It might be well, therefore, if the overlords of the air would stop counting heads and count values instead. THE TIMES

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people will be able to endure the division of our country only as long as the hope remains that this burden is not everlasting. This will remain the criterion by which German people judge a right or wrong solution to the European question: whether a proposal excludes the possibility of Germany reunification, or makes allowances for it, or whether it may make reunification easier.

Only an assembly of European states with moral and political stature—which Moscow recognises and Washington reaffirms—can offer security guarantees that are convincing. Not before such assurances are accepted by all our neighbours (and all of their neighbours) can the German people, as an entity, expect their just share of the opportunities that this next historical period offers. I do not believe that Germany's hopes can die, for they are part and parcel of the hopes for Europe.

WILLY BRANDT
Governing Mayor

Schöneberger Rathaus,
Berlin

"The World Scene Transformed"

I HAVE just had an opportunity to read Richard Lowenthal's "The World Scene Transformed" [ENCOUNTER, October]. May I say that I have only one disagreement with his argument: this concerns a recommendation that the only way to meet the problem of an independent French nuclear force is by assisting its development. The consequence of this course of action would be, I believe, to increase pressure from those in West Germany who would wish to move in the same direction.... In any case, the piece is Lowenthal at his best.

MARSHALL D. SHULMAN
Russian Research Center,
Harvard University

"The Intellectual Review"

IS NOT Professor Brogan unfair to Mr. Tate on one point [ENCOUNTER, January]? Surely the latter omitted *Scrutiny* precisely because one did *not* "look in vain" for a mention of it in Professor Brogan's essay.

J. C. MAXWELL
The University,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

"Homecoming"

I READ with interest Mr. Laqueur's sensitive and perceptive presentation of the political and social problems which his "Homecoming" [ENCOUNTER, December] to Wroclaw has raised in his mind. But in order to complete the picture you should now ask a Pole to report similarly on Lwow or Wilno under Soviet administration.

A. CZERNIAWSKI

AUTHORS

Francis Watson was born in Yorkshire in 1907, and educated at Downing College, Cambridge. He first went to India in 1938, living in the small princely state of Aundh in the household of the local Rajah. During the war he worked for the Government of India in various positions. He was for a time director of the Art department of the British Council after the war, and is now a free-lance writer. He has written and broadcast frequently about India in recent years. His publications include *Art Lies Bleeding* (1939), biographies of Wallenstein and Defoe; he is at present working on a book about Indian sculpture, and on a study of the recent Sino-Indian conflict....

Goronwy Rees, Welsh by birth, is the author of the autobiographical *A Bundle of Sensations* (Chatto & Windus)....

Bernard Lewis has just published *The Middle East and the West* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)....

Andrew Boyd is an assistant editor of *The Economist*....

V. S. Naipaul is the West Indian novelist. His best-known book is *A House for Mr. Biswas* (André Deutsch)....

Alastair Buchan is Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies in London....

Martin Dodsworth is a lecturer in English at Birkbeck College, University of London....

The essay by **Herbert Luethy** in our January number ("Once Again: Calvinism and Capitalism") was translated from the German by **Constantine FitzGibbon.**

Cover designed by **Colin Banks** and **John Miles.**

Suicide of a Nation?

OUR July 1963 issue, a survey of Britain today published under the title *Suicide of a Nation?*, aroused a great deal of interest and controversy. Unfortunately it sold out soon after publication and we have had to refuse many orders since. We are glad to say that one of our agents has now returned a small stock to us, which we can make available to readers for 5s. ($1.00) a copy, postage 6d. Readers should write as soon as possible to ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1, enclosing payment.

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Guinnethnology

According to anthropologists, heads are divided into the following classes:

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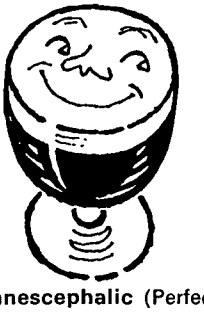
Brachycephalic (Short head)

Mesocephalic (Average head)



and **Guinnescephalic** (Perfect head)

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